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THE

PASTOR AND HIS PEOPLE;

OR, THE

WORD OF GOD AND THE FLOCK OF CHRIST.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "SACRED ELOQUENCE; OR, THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PREACHING," ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE volume which is here presented to the public is, whilst quite complete in itself, the Sequel, and in one sense the necessary conclusion, of the work on "Sacred Eloquence; or, the Theory and Practice of Preaching," which it was my privilege to offer to the kind consideration of the clergy some few years ago. In the former volume—following out the idea of St. Augustine, and M. Hamon, to whose valuable *Traite de la Predication* I am so deeply indebted—I proposed to myself to lay down and establish the general principles of Sacred Eloquence; in the present one, these great general principles are reduced to practice, and applied to the composition of all those different kinds of discourses with which it will be the duty of the Missionary Priest to deal. If this

work shall meet with but a small portion of the support which was so unequivocally bestowed by the bishops and clergy upon its predecessor, I shall, indeed, have every reason to feel both proud and grateful.

With regard to the idea which I have striven to keep before my mind in the composition of this treatise, I can only beg to be allowed to repeat a remark which occurs in the preface to "Sacred Eloquence"—viz., that I believe, as I hope, the verdict of my readers will assign to this work the quality of simplicity as its characteristic. In view of the special object which was before me, I have aimed at the greatest simplicity, as well of conception as of expression, which was compatible with the proper treatment of my subject. I have adhered so closely to this idea, that some, perhaps, may deem certain portions of this volume of too elementary a character, when viewed in relation with the class of readers who may naturally be supposed to use it. It may be so. I can only say, my own experience ever tends to prove to me, more and more unmistakably, that a work which aspires, like the

"PASTOR AND HIS PEOPLE," to be simply and practically useful, can scarcely be too elementary.

With the space at my disposal, it was impossible for me to treat all the subjects with which I have dealt as fully as their importance and utility might seem to require. My unvarying purpose has been to throw out substantial ideas, to suggest leading thoughts, and to indicate lines of study. The piety, the prudence, and the experience of my readers, will amply supply the rest.

If, in the pages of this book, I should appear to any to have taken upon myself the office of a teacher, I trust it is unnecessary for me to reply, that nothing was further from my intention, as nothing would have been more unbecoming in me.

In many places I have laid down, in plain and simple language, the teaching of the Saints and Doctors of the Church on the duties and obligations of the pastoral office ; but I certainly have not sought to obtrude upon my readers any opinion of my own on so grave and sacred a matter, nor am I conscious of having done so.

Finally, let me add, that if, in the course of this work, which, in some places at least, necessarily deals with questions of a character more or less dogmatical, I have unwittingly advanced any opinion which is false or less exact, I hereby retract the same, and submit my book, with unwavering confidence and obedient love, to the judgment of him who sits in the chair of Peter, and who directs with infallible voice, and with unerring wisdom, the teaching and the destinies of the Church of Christ—that Church to labour for whose interests and exaltation is at once my pride, my duty, and my priceless privilege.

T. J. P.

CONTENTS.

PART I.—HOLIDAY PREACHING.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Modern Pulpit Eloquence—Nature and utility of the Set Sermon—The circumstances in which it should be employed, ... 15

CHAPTER II.

The Great Christian Truths from a general point of view—Dogmatic, Controversial, and Moral Discourses—

Section I.—Dogmatic Discourses—Their utility and necessity, ... 31

Section II.—General Rules to be observed in Dogmatic Discourses—Controversial Sermons—Their danger—Twofold method of preaching them—Advantages of the Indirect Method, &c., ... 36

Section III.—The Christian Truths from a moral point of view—General Rules by which discourses of the kind are to be governed, ... 50

CHAPTER III.

Method of Preaching on the Attributes and Divine Perfections of God—Examples, . . . 56

CHAPTER IV.

Discourses on the Benefits of God—Two Principal Methods of arranging them, . . . 62

CHAPTER V.

The Four Last Things.

PAGE

Section I.—General Principles to be kept in mind when treating these great subjects, ... 67

Section II.—Method of Preaching on the necessity of salvation—Points to be contained, explicitly or implicitly, in every good discourse on this subject, . . 70

Section III.—Death—Errors to be avoided, and methods which may be followed in treating this subject, . 73

Section IV.—Judgment—Practical suggestions, and methods of preaching on the General or Particular Judgment, ... 77

Section V.—Hell—Special difficulty of treating this matter well—The Sceptic and the Tepid Christian—Three principal errors into which young preachers are apt to fall—Practical divisions of the subject, . . 81

Section VI —Heaven—Principal methods of dividing the subject, ... 88

CHAPTER VI.

The Mysteries of our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

Section I.—Obligation of entering into the Spirit of the Church in celebrating the Great Festivals of the Christian Year—What is meant by the Mysteries, and the means of securing our end, ... 90

Section II.—The method of instructing our hearers thoroughly in any Mystery, ... 94

Section III.—How to cause our hearers to render due honor to any Mystery, ... 98

Section IV.—How to cause our hearers to participate in the graces of a Mystery, ... 100

Section V.—Various methods of presenting the Mysteries —Dogmatic, Moral, and Mixed Form—Bourdaloue, . 102

CHAPTER VII.

THE PANEGYRICS OF THE SAINTS AND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

PAGE

SECTION I.—Antiquity and special utility of this class of subjects, ... 106

SECTION II.—The sources whence to draw the materials for the Panegyric of a Saint, ... 110

SECTION III.—Different methods of presenting the Panegyric—The moral and historical forms, . . . 115

SECTION IV.—Comparison between the two forms of presenting a Panegyric, ... 122

SECTION V.—Rules common to every kind of Panegyric, . 127

PART II.—FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION—ITS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION, NATURE, AND OBLIGATION, AS DEFINED BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT—REMARKS OF THE BISHOP OF ORLEANS—SPECIAL QUALITIES OF FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION, AND ITS LEADING SUBJECTS, . . . 137

CHAPTER II.

THE HOMILY.

SECTION I.—The Antiquity, Nature, and Great Utility of this form of discourse, ... 149

SECTION II.—FIRST METHOD OF COMPOSING THE HOMILY.—The nature of this Method, and the principal objection which is urged against it, . . . 153

SECTION III.—SECOND METHOD.—Nature of this Method—Its advantages over the First. 156

PAGE

SECTION IV.—THIRD METHOD.—Peculiar nature and excellency of this Method—Plan of Massillon's Homily on the Raising of Lazarus—Practical suggestions to be kept in view when preparing a Homily according to this Method, ... 158

CHAPTER III.

A COURSE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

SECTION I.—What is meant by a Course of Instruction—Its utility and necessity—Catechism of the Council of Trent—Matter of such a Course—Special characteristics of every good instruction, ... 169

CHAPTER IV.

A COURSE OF INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMMANDMENTS—THE VIRTUES AND THE VICES.

SECTION I.—General Principles to be kept in view, . 178

SECTION II.—Method of explaining any Virtue or Vice, . 180

SECTION III.—Motives for embracing Virtue, or avoiding Vice, ... 183

SECTION IV.—Means of acquiring Virtue or correcting Vice, ... 185

SECTION V.—Method of arranging an Instruction on any Virtue or Vice, ... 187

CHAPTER V.

A COURSE OF INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS.

SECTION I.—General Idea of the Nature of this Course, . 195

SECTION II.—The nature and excellence of the Sacraments, 196

SECTION III.—Dispositions required in the worthy Recipient of the Sacraments, ... 201

SECTION IV.—Obligations which the Sacraments impose upon those who receive them, ... 202

CHAPTER VI.

A Course of Instructions on Prayer.

PAGE

Section I.—General Principles of such a Course, . . 205

Section II.—Method of preparing and arranging an Instruction on Prayer—Motives of Prayer, . . 208

Section III.—The things to be demanded in Prayer, . 211

Section IV.—The conditions or qualities of acceptable Prayer, ... 212

CHAPTER VII.

Catechetical Instruction.

Section I.—The strict obligation of Catechetical Instruction, as shown by the teaching of the Council of Trent, of Benedict XIV., and the most eminent Theologians—Natural obligation from the office of Pastor—Opinions of St. Francis Xavier and St. Francis de Sales, . 215

Section II.—True Idea of Catechetical Instruction—Its definition by the Bishop of Orleans—Its universal applicability, ... 225

Section III.—The Catechism of Young Children—Its great importance and principal qualities, . . . 230

Section IV.—Catechism of First Communion—Peculiar nature of this class—Special instructions and preparation—Retreat before, and Exercises after, First Communion—Means of perseverance, ... 245

Section V.—The Catechism of Perseverance—Great importance of this class—Means of ensuring its success—Sunday-Schools, Confraternities, &c. &c., . . 254

Section VI.—Instruction of Ignorant Adults—Great difficulty of this matter—Practical means—Advice of Benedict XIV.—The leading qualifications of a successful Catechist: Learning, Piety, Zeal, and Prudence, . 262

Section VII.—Recapitulation of matter to be taught at Catechism—Method of preparing the Instruction—Its principal qualities—Authorities to be consulted, . 280

PART III.—DELIVERY.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

True Idea of Delivery—Falsity of the Principles laid down by a Modern Writer—Necessity and Essential Properties of a Good Delivery, . 291

CHAPTER II.

The Voice.

Section I.—The obligation of making himself heard imperative upon everyone who is obliged to speak in public—Means of doing so—Articulation—Pitch—Rhetorical Pauses, ... 305

Section II.—The obligation of speaking, not merely so as to be heard, but with full Effect and Expression—The Elocution of the Passions—Expression and Modulation—The manner in which due Expression is to be given to the various parts of a Discourse, . . . 316

CHAPTER III.

Gesture.

Section I.—True Idea of Gesture, and the place which it naturally holds in animated delivery—The Action of the Pulpit, ... 325

Section II.—Leading Qualities of the Action of the Pulpit, 335

HOLIDAY PREACHING.

" Testificor coram Deo et Jesu Christo qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos: prædica verbum: insta opportunè, importunè: argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientiâ et doctrinâ."

II. Tim. iv. 1, 2.

THE PASTOR AND HIS PEOPLE,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

MODERN PULPIT ELOQUENCE—NATURE AND UTILITY OF THE SET SERMON—THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE EMPLOYED.

MULTUM interest utrum pauci adsint an multi docti an indocti, an utroque genere mixti; urbani an rustici, an hi et illi simul, an populus ex omni hominum genere temperatus sit . . . quia, cum eadem omnibus debeatur caritas, non eadem omnibus adhibenda est medicina.—S. Aug. de catech. rud. cap. 15.

Having laid down, and thoroughly established, those great general principles of Pulpit Oratory by which the preacher is to gain his threefold end, the Instruction, the Conviction, and the Persuasion of his hearers—*Docere*, *Placere*, et *Movere*—St. Augustine proceeds, in the words which we have just quoted, to the further development of his subject, and to that application of

general principles to particular cases, which is no less necessary and essential, than the establishment of the principles themselves. Pulpit Oratory is above and before all, popular in the best and truest sense of the term. It knows how to adapt itself to all men; it makes itself intelligible to all; it is able to enlighten every mind, and to move every heart. It is the property of no class in particular; it belongs equally to the poor as to the rich; to the ignorant as to the learned. It is the heritage of the people of God, a purchased people and a holy nation, and the Pastor is the instrument employed by the Almighty to distribute this heritage, and to break this bread of life to His flock. In very truth, the Pastor has been appointed to speak great things to his people: *Dictor est rerum magnarum:* and, so far as the subject-matter of his preaching is concerned, there is no more to be said: *Omnia magna quæ dicimus.*

But, it is very different when we come to consider the manner in which these great things, these truths which are to make men wise unto everlasting life, are to be conveyed to the Christian people. Very frequently, perhaps as a rule, these great truths will have to be delivered and enforced in the most simple and elementary terms. The pastor will be bound by the most essential and fundamental of all obligations, that of making himself *intelligible* to his hearers, to vary his discourses, and to adapt them, with the most rigorous care and exactness, to the circumstances of time, place, and person, in which he may find himself.

Hence, as each kind of discourse is subject to its

own peculiar rules, in accordance with which it must necessarily be prepared, it evidently follows that having, in a volume, entitled, "Sacred Eloquence; or, the Theory and Practice of Preaching," already established the great general principles of Pulpit Oratory, we now proceed, with St. Augustine, to the consideration of those peculiar rules, and of the manner in which general principles are to be applied, and rendered subservient to particular cases.

Sermons will vary, either from the very nature of the subject itself, or by reason of the particular style and manner according to which it may be treated. In a broad and general way, however, the discourses which will be delivered by the Sacred Orator, may be divided into the "Set Sermon," and the "Familiar Instruction;" each most excellent and most useful in its own time and place, but requiring, as is plain, a widely different method and style of preparation and delivery. In order to render this important matter as clear as possible to the young preacher, we therefore propose to consider, in this treatise, the Set Sermon, and the Familiar Instruction, from all those points of view, and in all those details, which can be of profit or interest to him.

In the first place, we naturally direct our attention to the Set Sermon, properly so called. By the Set Sermon, we understand a discourse, composed in conformity with those fixed rules which are insisted upon by all masters of oratory, and which have been sufficiently explained and developed in the first series of this work. The Set Sermon supposes a style chaste, elevated, and

grand, so far as the nature of the subject, and the peculiar capacities, as well of the preacher as of his hearers, may admit. It supposes a text, an exordium, and an argumentative part; and, in addition to those modified appeals to the passions which will be judiciously scattered through the whole discourse, it supposes a formal peroration in which the art of persuasion, or, in other words, the power of influencing our hearers, and of moving their wills by appealing to the passions by which those wills are influenced and governed, will be handled and applied according to the rules laid down by rhetoricians.[1] It supposes, in one word, an amount of preparation, and a finished style of composition and of delivery, which are neither required nor expected in the Familiar Instruction.

Having thus laid down our idea of the Set Sermon, it may naturally be asked whether it is ever expedient to deliver discourses of this formal character; and, if so, how frequently it should be done?

From the very fact that the Set Sermon is a discourse of the form and character described, it evidently follows that it is not the one which will be generally employed. A sermon of this kind is intended, as we shall presently see, to be employed on rare occasions, and to produce, what we may consider, extraordinary effects. Now, it is evident that if a preacher were to deliver one of these formal discourses every time he addressed his flock, his sermons would soon cease to produce any

[1] See "Sacred Eloquence; or, the Theory and Practice of Preaching." 3rd edition, p. 254, et seq.—Duffy, Dublin and London.

extraordinary effects. His hearers would quickly become habituated to these solemn appeals. Becoming habituated to them they would soon grow indifferent, and, at last, the preacher would find it almost impossible, no matter how earnestly he might labour to this end, to rouse his flock to that warmth and enthusiasm which, occasionally at least, are awakened in the bosom of every really fervent Christian.

Moreover, although most excellent in its way, and most certainly to be employed *in tempore opportuno*, this formal style of preaching is not, at all events as a general rule, the most useful, or the most expedient. The poorer class of people, such as compose the vast majority of the congregations in missionary countries, need a much more simple style of discourse. They require to have the Christian Doctrine explained to them in the most familiar terms; with the greatest simplicity of language; and illustrated by all those examples, comparisons, and details which may serve to bring the great rudiments of their faith home to the comprehension of those who, perhaps, have but little capacity to understand, and less leisure to devote to the consideration of those momentous truths upon the right appreciation of which their eternal salvation depends. And hence, we see that the holy fathers, and the zealous missionaries, who have preached the gospel with the greatest fruit to the ignorant and the unbelieving, did not employ the style or method of a Bourdaloue, a Bossuet, or a Massillon. And hence too, perhaps, it is that we not unfrequently find the inhabitants of our large cities, who listen to many Set Sermons, and run

after many distinguished preachers, less zealous and less thoroughly pious than those poor simple country folk, whose pastor seldom, perhaps never, aspires to a more ambitious flight than a solid, practical, and instructive catechetical discourse. And this, too, may perhaps be the explanation of the fact that the zealous missioner often produces more fruit, during the time of a Retreat, by his simple and popular style of preaching, than the finished orator who, during the season of Lent or of Advent, attracts, by the charms of his finished eloquence, admiring and enthusiastic crowds to the cathedral in which he preaches.

But, whilst it is true that the familiar discourse is the one which will be most generally employed by the missionary priest, it is no less certain that there are occasions on which the people look for, and have a right to expect, a Set Sermon; and if, in these circumstances, the pastor of souls, realizing the duties and the claims of his position, come before his flock with a discourse carefully prepared and full of vigour, and if he deliver this discourse with due zeal and warmth, he may be quite certain that it will produce the most salutary impressions upon his hearers, that it will arouse their faith, and cause them to enter into themselves.

It is to be feared that many flocks, through the incompetence or the indifference of their pastors, lose the benefit of what we may call holiday preaching. The intention of the Church in celebrating the great festivals of the Christian year is surely to bring the object of these festivals prominently before her children, that their faith may be awakened, their love inflamed,

and their wills moved to salutary resolutions. And, it is no less her intention, that those who are charged with the care of her people, should seize the opportunity, which is thus presented to them, of explaining to their flocks the nature of the mystery which is celebrated, and the fruit which it ought to produce in their souls. But the pastor who does not realize the nature and extent of his responsibilities to his flock; or, realizing them, is indifferent to them; will allow the great festivals of the Christian year to pass by almost without observation. So far as preparation, style, or delivery is concerned, there will be no perceptible difference between the discourse which he will deliver on an ordinary Sunday, and that which he will prepare, or, to speak more strictly, will not prepare, for the greatest solemnity of the year. As a natural result of this negligence or indifference, his flock soon lose their appreciation of the beautiful variety which the Church proposes to us in her sacred offices, and the benefit which they should derive from their celebration. The pastor makes no distinction in his discourses between Advent or Lent, between the Nativity or the Crucifixion; and, it is scarcely necessary to add, that the flock soon become as cold and indifferent as he who is bound by so many solemn obligations, not merely to teach them all those things which may make them wise unto everlasting life, but who is equally bound to do his very utmost that they may secure the rewards of that eternal life in all its blessed abundance. *Ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant.*

But, it is not thus with him who realizes the respon-

sibilities and the privileges of his position as the guide, pastor, and teacher of those souls for whom Christ died. Laying aside, for this occasion, the familiar style which he usually employs—interrupting for this time, the course of catechetical instruction on which he may be engaged—he eagerly enters into the spirit of the Church, and, on the recurrence of any of the leading festivals of the year, devotes himself with all the ability at his command, to the composition of a discourse which, whilst it will have for its primary object to bring that festival before the minds and hearts of his hearers, will also aspire to do so with such graces of diction, and such charm of delivery, as will be worthy, at least as far as he can make it so, of the solemnity on which it is produced. His flock will thus be gratified whilst they are edified and instructed. The beautiful variety of the offices of the Church will be properly recognised, and, being thus recognised, will produce its due action upon the souls of the Christian people. Such a flock, taught by such a pastor, will rapidly advance from virtue to virtue, until at last they reach the holy mountain of God. Entering into the penitential spirit of the Church, they will lament and do penance for their sins at the times of Lent and Advent; and they will rejoice and be glad with her when she celebrates the glorious festivals of her divine Spouse and His immaculate mother. Thus appreciating the spirit of the Church's teaching, they will quickly learn how to acquire all those spiritual advantages which that teaching is designed to impart.

We, then, take it for granted that the zealous pastor of souls will, according to the measure of his own ability,

and the capacity and intellectual attainments of his flock, lay himself out from time to time to vary the uniformity of his familiar teaching, by the preparation and production of a Set Sermon. The great general truths which usually form the subject of the Set Sermon may be reduced to two or three leading heads.

I. The Great Christian Truths, &c. The Attributes, and Divine Perfections of God; as His Justice, Mercy, Omnipotence, &c. The Benefits bestowed by the Creator upon His creatures: as the Redemption, the Eucharist, &c. The Four Last Things.

II. The Mysteries of the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Blessed Mother: as the Nativity, the Immaculate Conception, &c.

III. The Solemn or Familiar Panegyrics of the Saints.

We have, therefore, to consider each of these subjects as briefly as possible; but at the same time with such a degree of practical minuteness as may assist the young preacher to handle them in a becoming and effective manner. It may not, perhaps, be out of place to remark here that the great French orators, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon, have wrought the Set Sermon to its highest degree of perfection. Preaching as they did in exceptional circumstances, and before exceptional audiences, it would be little less than foolish to propose them to the young priest, or the hard-working missionary, as his models to be copied and imitated in all the details of their discourses. But, making all due allowances, *positis ponendis*, it cannot be useless to any one, and

may be of the greatest advantage to many, to study carefully the compositions of these masters of sacred eloquence, that we may see for ourselves the solidity of matter, the closeness of argument, the graces of diction, and the warmth and fervour of expression, of which the sacred oration is susceptible in the hands of the finished artist.

Bossuet presents us with the loftiest thoughts and conceptions of the great Christian truths and the mysteries of our faith, and is without an equal in the grandeur and magnificence of his views. Bourdaloue is, before all, the close, solid, and rigorous logician, developing the Christian truths with an exactness and precision that are invincible. Massillon excels in the faculty of appreciating, and the power of expressing, the most tender thoughts, the most convincing arguments, and the warmest feelings. If we could hope to find any one man combining in himself the grand ideas of Bossuet, with the close reasoning of Bourdaloue, and the Christian warmth and generous sentiments of Massillon, then indeed we should have the perfect Christian orator. Of the three great preachers of the French school, Massillon, perhaps, possesses in the highest degree that triple faculty which St. Augustine lays down as the foundation of all perfection in sacred oratory—the faculty of instructing, of pleasing, and of moving an audience: *Docere, Placere, et Movere.*

The English school of preaching differs very widely in most respects from the French, and although of late years there has been a movement, in the right direction, and we are beginning to put on some of that warmth

and energy which characterize the style of our more impulsive neighbours, there is still too much foundation for the censure which the French critics pass on the English preachers, viz., that they are philosophers and logicians, but not orators. The genius of the two peoples is so very, and perhaps so essentially, different, that the warm, animated, and florid exhortation which would be so pleasing and attractive to a French audience, would be equally distasteful to the English congregation, who are accustomed to be appealed to much more frequently through the intellect than through their feelings. But, whilst our modern Catholic preachers, as well as the more earnest and advanced ministers of the Establishment, are cultivating a warmth of style and an energy of delivery which were unknown fifty years ago, no one surely can complain that the great modern French orators, Ravignan, Lacordaire, Felix, or Hyacinth, are deficient either in the faculty or in the use of close, solid, and convincing argument; and it is because Massillon seems to possess in a higher degree than any other sacred orator of modern times that French earnestness and warmth, combined with English accuracy and reason, which, in our humble judgment, combine to form the finished preacher, that we have proposed him to our readers as a model in whom they will find the most perfect and finished development of the three-fold power or faculty, upon the necessity of which St. Augustine so earnestly insists.

We are not very rich in sacred orators in our English tongue. The writings of the Puritan divines are intolerable to the taste of our age, on account of the infinite

divisions and sub-divisions, as well as the wearisome casuistry, which disfigure them. Even gentle Jeremy Taylor, who has been not inaptly called the "poet among preachers," and to whom Hallam assigns the great praise of being the chief ornament of the English pulpit up to the middle of the seventeenth century, did not escape the "hair-splitting" tendency of the age, the tedious copiousness of illustration, and the minute divisions and sub-divisions which were so much in vogue in the time in which he lived; and his style, undoubtedly beautiful as it is, is neither extensively known nor much admired in our day.

After the Restoration, the style of the English divines underwent a considerable modification, as was but natural. The pedantry and scholastic divisions of the Puritan sectaries were laid aside, but there was also laid aside at the same time that warmth and animated zeal, mistaken though it might be, which had lent such a force to the rough discourses of a "Praise-God Barebones," and gained for them more than once such substantial though deplorable results. From this period, the clergy of the Establishment began to connect whatever was earnest and passionate in preaching with dissent, and hence the foundation of that dry, unpersuasive, argumentative manner which has been for so many years the great characteristic of English pulpit oratory. The idea upon which this style of preaching is founded is correct as far as it goes; but the misfortune is that it does not go far enough. Dr. Clark, one of the most polished pulpit orators whom the Establishment has produced since the Restoration, affords a very good

illustration of this assertion. If his sermons were designed for men possessing neither imaginations to be appealed to, nor passions to be moved—men who should be creatures guided merely by the reason and the intellect—then they would be perfect. They abound in good sense, in accurate reasoning, in pertinent application of Holy Scripture; the style is plain and clear, the language is not wanting in purity and elegance; it is only when we begin to inquire critically into their power of interesting the imagination, and of moving the will, that we find them to be deficient in the most essential element of true pulpit eloquence.

Tillotson seems to approach nearer than most English divines to the character of the popular preacher; but his composition is too low, and his style too feeble, to allow us to assign to him that rank amongst sacred orators which his natural qualifications, had they been more assiduously cultivated, would undoubtedly have qualified him to take. His discourses are characterized by sound sense, and by an earnest warmth which is very uncommon in an English divine, but their effect is fatally marred by that feebleness of composition to which we have just referred.

We may conclude this glance at the sacred orators whom the establishment has produced, by a reference to Barrow and Atterbury, certainly two of the greatest names of which the Church of England can boast.

Barrow is more remarkable for his wonderful fertility of invention, and for the great force and strength of his conceptions, than for the success of his execution, or the graces of his style. He furnishes us with a striking

example of undisciplined genius, of genius which fails to produce its due effect, simply from this want of study and of discipline. Bishop Atterbury, on the other hand, although possessing less talent and rough genius than Barrow, is infinitely superior to him in the correctness and beauty of his style, whilst he is not deficient in that warmth which is so essential to true eloquence.

Considering the state of bondage and repression in which the Catholic Church has been compelled to exist in these countries for the last three or four hundred years, it is not astonishing if she has not been very fertile in great orators. When it is as much as men can do to exist—when they have to struggle for very life—they have little time to devote to what may be called the superfluities of that existence, or little desire to cultivate mere elegance and grace. Nevertheless, the Church of Ireland has not lacked amongst her sons many great pulpit orators, who, if they did not absolutely reach the highest pinnacle, at least attained a very respectable eminence. Not to go back beyond recent times, we may mention Father Kenny, the Jesuit; Archdeacon O'Keefe of Cork; and the venerable and saintly Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev. Dr. Murray; men, the memory of whose eloquence is yet fresh amongst us, and it is a memory which speaks in unmistakable breathings of the power and the force of those who have passed away. An illustrious prelate of the Irish Church, himself one of its brightest ornaments, and most distinguished pulpit orators of the present day, has told us that he considered Father Kenny the greatest preacher to whom he ever listened. The great Jesuit spoke right from his

heart, and his eloquence owed the real secret of its force to that heaven-born inspiration which is not found in books, nor learnt by precept. "*Flumina ex ventre ejus fluebant aquâ vivâ*," might be truly applied to him. Although Archdeacon O'Keefe has left no sermons behind him, the traditions of Cork amply testify to his power. Less eloquent than Kenny, and less powerful than O'Keefe, the quiet, sweet, pious, and sensible speech of Dr. Murray possessed a charm which was peculiarly its own, and it flowed from his lips with a winning appropriateness, and a gentle grace, which could scarcely have been surpassed.

Without entering into invidious comparisons between the pulpit orators who still flourish amongst us, we need not pass beyond the domain of St. Dominic to know that he still possesses children who are powerful in word and in work, who worthily maintain the traditions of their illustrious order, and who prove to admiring crowds that the Irish Dominicans of to-day need not fear to take their place amongst the ranks of those who have worn the white robe of St. Dominic with so much glory to their Father, and so much benefit to God's holy Church. The most perfect specimen of pulpit oratory which we have ever heard, was from the lips of a venerable Irish Dominican bishop, whose sanctity and eloquence shed equal lustre on his country and his order.

England might well be proud of Cardinal Wiseman, whose clear, logical mind, and wonderful felicity, as well of conception as of expression, raised him to the highest rank amongst argumentative preachers, although a certain coldness and dryness of manner prevented him

from becoming a great popular orator, in the full meaning of the term. And we may safely affirm that for ready and comprehensive grasp of mind, for chaste beauty of language, for facility in illustration, and unrivalled powers of amplification, the great Oratorian, John Henry Newman, stands alone among the writers and thinkers of England; and he who desires to nourish the spark of genius which may be in his soul, he who cherishes the worthy ambition of becoming a sacred orator in the true sense of the word, that thus he may do the work of God more efficiently, and be able to defend the rights of holy Church more valiantly and with greater fruit, can do no better than take the writings of this eminent man for his models and his guide.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN TRUTHS FROM A GENERAL POINT OF VIEW.—DOGMATIC, CONTROVERSIAL, AND MORAL DISCOURSES.

SECTION I.

Dogmatic Discourses—Their Utility and Necessity.

BY the Christian Truths we understand, in this place, the attributes and perfections of God—the benefits bestowed upon the creature by his Creator—and the Four Last Things. It would be mere loss of time to attempt to prove that these are amongst the most sublime, as they are amongst the most natural subjects which can, and ought, engage the attention of the sacred orator on those occasions, when he may deem it his duty to prepare a Set Sermon for his people.

Before, however, proceeding to consider these great truths more in detail, it may be well to view them in their universality; to weigh the general principles which are more or less applicable to each class of them, and the two-fold method according to which they may be treated.

The great Christian truths may be treated either

dogmatically, or from a moral point of view. By a *dogmatic* sermon on these or kindred subjects, we understand a discourse in which the preacher proposes to himself to establish some point of belief by arguments drawn from the very foundations of Christian truth, with a view to strengthen his hearers more and more firmly in their faith, and to cause that faith to bring forth more and more plentifully the fruit of good works. These great truths are said to be treated from a *moral* point of view, when they are presented by the preacher, more as motives for the practice of Christian virtue, than as grounds for Christian belief. Each mode of treatment has its own special advantages, and is guided by its own special rules.

And in the first place, it is certainly a matter of the utmost importance, and of the highest utility, to establish and strengthen the faith of our hearers in these great fundamental truths of Christianity, by solid and unanswerable proofs. There is nothing which awakens such a grand idea of their religion, and such a high esteem of it, in the hearts of the faithful, as to show them that every article of their faith rests upon proofs which are irrefragable, and upon a certitude which is unassailable. The Christian faith is a grand and mighty edifice, every stone of which bears the impress of the finger of God. These marks of the Divinity penetrate the soul to which they are clearly presented, and fill it with esteem and veneration for a religion which has so evidently come to man from God. At this grand spectacle the irresistible convictions of the intellect act upon the will, and excite it to a holy

enthusiasm, rendering it strong, invincible, and ready for every sacrifice. The man who is penetrated with a profound conviction of the eternal truth of the faith which he professes, is prepared for every trial. It was this conviction which sustained the martyrs in their conflicts, the confessors in their prisons, and the holy anchorets in their deserts. It was this conviction which, in every age, brought forth so many saints in the Church of God, to adorn her with their virtues during their pilgrimage on earth, and to shine like stars for all eternity in the kingdom of her divine Spouse.

But, in order that the pastor may secure in his parish those inestimable results, which are the fruit of a strong and lively conviction, he must, from time to time, awaken and reanimate the faith of his people, by bringing before them the leading dogmas of their religion, establishing those dogmas by solid reasoning and by logical proofs, which shall acquire a double force from the accents of true and deep conviction, in which he shall give them expression. Unless he act in this manner, the faith of his people will soon begin to languish and grow cold. It will soon become a dead faith—a faith without works; and it will be well if it be not, sooner or later, altogether extinguished.

In these days we live amidst an atmosphere of influences which are adverse to every prompting of Christian truth, and to every conviction which is founded on the simplicity of Christian faith. The doubts which are raised in our own hearts by him who was a liar from the beginning; those which are suggested by the very books which we read, by the

newspapers and periodicals which we take up, by the anti-religious productions, which the zeal of the scoffer and the infidel scatters with such reckless profusion, and by the discourses to which we are every day obliged to listen in our ordinary and inevitable intercourse with the world—all these things, and a thousand more of the like nature, inevitably tend to undermine and to weaken the simplicity of Christian faith. And how are our Catholic people to be protected against these evils, and strengthened against these insidious and ceaseless attacks of the world and the devil upon the priceless jewel of their faith, unless by the frequent exposition, and the clear and solid establishment, of the dogmas and the teachings of Christian truth. Their faith must be sustained by dogmatic teaching, and strengthened against all the assaults of the enemy. Thus strengthened, they will easily resist his fiercest attacks. Deprived of this teaching and instruction, their faith will be in danger of irretrievable shipwreck. Would that we had no experience, deplorable beyond measure, to bring to bear upon this matter! How many young men of promise, who were born for, and should have laid their hand on better things, have made a shipwreck of their faith, and been swallowed up in the abyss of vaunting unbelief, because the priest who catechised them in their childhood, or who had charge of them in the opening years of their manhood, did not take sufficient care to lay the foundation of its faith deep in that young soul, which was then so susceptible of good, and, alas, of evil impressions. Led astray by the force of his passions or the deadly influences of evil companions, even

he who has been thoroughly instructed in his faith, and carefully reared in the sanctifying influences of a religious home, may for a time prove unfaithful to the one and the other, and wander away from the paths of duty and of truth. But, the chances are a hundred to one that, sooner or later, such a one will return to himself, to his duty, and to his God. The salutary influences of his youth, and the saving truths which were then firmly established in his soul, will, one day or other, re-assert themselves and lead him back again into the path of rectitude, from which he may have but too long strayed away.

But, on the other hand, take a young Catholic who has never been thoroughly taught his religion and the grounds of his faith, and throw him amongst the evil and pernicious influences with which a young man is now-a-days almost inevitably surrounded in the world, and there is every reason to fear that he will succumb to those influences; that he will fall before the force of the three-fold concupiscence to whose glorification the whole world seems to be devoted; and that, falling, he will fall to rise no more. And what is said of the young man may be said with equal truth, *positis ponendis*, of every one who has to fight the battle of life, and make his way to heaven through the pit-falls of the world.

It surely, then, requires no further argument to show that, in these days, the establishment of the great Christian truths by clear, solid, and convincing arguments, is one of the noblest and most useful themes which can engage the attention of the sacred orator,

whilst it is at the same time of the most paramount importance, and of the most rigorous obligation.

SECTION II.

General Rules to be observed in Dogmatic Discourses—Controversial Sermons—Their Danger—Twofold Method of Preaching them—Advantages of the Indirect Method, &c.

Premising that we speak here of a preacher addressing an ordinary congregation, in ordinary circumstances—since, as is evident, we do not pretend to lay down laws by which such an orator as P. Felix is to be guided, when addressing those exceptional audiences who crowd round the pulpit of Notre Dame—the following rules will be found practically useful:—

I. The Catholic preacher, when addressing an ordinary congregation, such as assembles in our churches, ought not, in his dogmatic discourses on the great Christian truths, to seem to suppose that there are any amongst his hearers who are capable of doubting of the truth which he is about to establish. In the first place, as those who do not believe, seldom, if ever, go to church, his remarks, if addressed to them, would be thrown away. Secondly, there are in every congregation many simple souls who think that all the world believes as they do, and that no man of sense or of intelligence can possibly entertain any doubt about the great truths of the Catholic faith.

It is a matter of the greatest importance not to dis-

turb the undoubting faith of these holy souls, nor to cast a shadow upon the beautiful simplicity which is at once the firmest proof, as it is the highest charm of that faith. If you lay yourself out to explain to them that there are those who do not believe in the great Christian truths, you at once destroy the charming simplicity of their belief. You scandalize them, in bringing before them the example of the scoffer and the infidel. You almost inevitably weaken, at least in some degree, the faith of those who listen to you; and all this without any sufficient reason or compensating gain.

II. It is not expedient in discourses of this nature to announce openly to our hearers that we propose to ourselves to prove such or such a truth. We should rather endeavour to conceal our design under such a form of expression as will give us full scope to establish the truth in question without any formal announcement that we are about to do so. The prudence of this line of conduct has been already sufficiently established if there be question of those simple undoubting souls who form the majority of an ordinary Catholic congregation. Nor is such a mode of proceeding less to be recommended if our discourse is to be addressed, partly or altogether, to the scoffer or the unbeliever. If we make an open attack upon these men, or upon their errors, we at once put them on their guard, and place them in open and defiant opposition to ourselves and our teaching: they at once intrench themselves behind their own pride and self-love; they listen to us with restraint, and with a predetermined will not to be convinced by our arguments, or moved by our appeals. Their only motive and object

in listening to us is to pick out the weak points in our discourse, and, as a natural result, that discourse remains without fruit.

And, this, perhaps, may be the most fitting place in which to make some remarks about the controversial sermon, properly so called.

The controversial sermon, even when handled with the utmost discretion, is a very dangerous weapon, and one which only charity or necessity will justify the preacher in assuming. When neither charity nor necessity imposes upon the preacher the obligation of taking it up, he will certainly do more wisely to leave it alone. It may be doubted whether one spark of the love of God were ever lighted up in the soul, or whether one unbeliever were ever converted to the faith, by the mere agency of the controversial sermon. Of the evil passions which are stirred up, and of the rancour, the bitterness, and the uncharitableness, which are too often the fruits of these discourses, there can, unfortunately, be no doubt.

But, whilst the prudent preacher will certainly not attempt the controversial sermon without sufficient and justifying cause, nor without a due consideration and careful weighing of his own powers, it must be admitted that there are occasions on which the interests of religion, of virtue, and of truth require the pastor of souls to stand out, openly and fearlessly, in their defence. And in these cases, which, provide against or shun them as he may, can scarcely be very rare in a missionary country, it becomes a matter of very considerable interest and importance to the pastor to prepare himself

to discharge in the most effective manner this unpleasant but necessary duty, with the least injury to his own flock, with the greatest utility to those who differ from him, and, above all, with the greatest glory to God, and to the eternal interests of His holy name. And let him be convinced that there is no discourse which demands such earnest thought and prayerful study in its conception, such prudence in its composition, and such zeal and tender charity in its delivery, as the controversial sermon.

A controversial sermon may be prepared in two ways. A preacher may attack, openly and directly, the religious belief or the peculiar doctrines of his separated brethren; and this is called the *direct* method. Or, he may lay himself out to expose, and to prove, the Catholic doctrine, without any open reference to the objections which are advanced against it, or to the religious professions of those who hold the opposite tenets; and this is called the *indirect* method. It is called the indirect method, because, in this way, the preacher seems to be simply engaged in the explanation and sustaining of the Catholic doctrine; and, whilst he is actually refuting and overthrowing the false ideas which are set up in opposition to it, he leaves the impression upon his adversary's mind that nothing is further from the intention of him to whom he listens than such a wish, or mode of proceeding.

There can be no dispute as to the relative merits of these two methods. From what has been said in No. 1, and for reasons which are too obvious to require recapi-

tulation, it must be evident to the young preacher that nothing but ill-will, anger, and confusion, can result from a direct and open attack upon the religious belief of those who are opposed to him. All the great masters of the art of controversial preaching, St. Francis of Sales foremost amongst them, are loud in their praise of that method which we have called the indirect; nor are they less out-spoken as to the obligation of employing it on those occasions on which it is necessary to deliver a discourse of this nature.

The great apostle of Geneva, whose authority is of such weight in this matter, from the very fact that he may be considered as the most successful missionary of these later times, assures us that he never knew any good to result from a direct attack upon the belief of the heretic. "Those sermons," he says, "in which we openly attack, and as a matter of dispute, the errors of our separated brethren, repel in place of attracting them to us. When they perceive that we attack them, they naturally put themselves on their guard against us. If we bring the light too suddenly before their gaze, they instinctively close their eyes. They immediately distrust the discourse in which he who proposes the difficulty also proposes the answer; in which the preacher says what he wishes without any one having the power to reply, or to contradict him. "I never found this method," he proceeds to say, "produce any fruit; and I remarked the same thing in those who were associated with me in the conversion of the Chablis."

The method followed by this great saint in his con-

troversial preaching was eminently simple and practical. Instead of openly and directly attacking the belief of his adversaries, he contented himself with a clear and simple exposition of the truths of the Catholic faith in all their majestic beauty, but without introducing one word which could savour, even remotely, of controversy. And, beyond all doubt, such is the method which will be employed by the prudent preacher, in these our days, when charity and patience and good will are to be no less earnestly cultivated than they were in the times of Saint Francis of Sales; in these days when many men are anxiously inquiring for the truth, and when they are to be won to that truth by much love and much prayer, as surely as they will be repelled from it by the angry strife and the bitter rankling words of religious controversy.

To exemplify our meaning still more. Let us suppose that the preacher wishes to establish the truth of the presence of our Divine Lord in the adorable sacrament of the altar. If he comes forward, and without further introduction or preamble, lays down his proposition "that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the sacrament of the Eucharist," the unbeliever, or the heretic, who may be listening, will at once put himself in opposition, and, before the preacher has developed one of his proofs, will have quite made up his mind not to be convinced, no matter how eloquently the thesis may be urged, or how closely it may be argued. But, it will be very different, if, concealing his design, the preacher, in words full of sweetness and charity, lays out his proposition in some such way as this: "Jesus Christ

has shown an infinite love for man in instituting the adorable sacrament of the altar. For, we judge of the love of any person for us by the greatness and the magnificence of those gifts which he bestows upon us. But, in this adorable sacrament, Jesus Christ has bestowed upon us the greatest benefit which even a God could give. For, it is not a mere figure, it is not a mere memorial of Himself which he gives us, but it is his own most sacred Body and Blood, hypostatically united to his soul and divinity, which he bestows upon us, as is evidently proved by the words of holy Writ: This is my Body," &c. &c. Proceeding in this manner, the preacher will, actually and effectually, prove every point of the Catholic doctrine in question; whilst his adversary, thinking him wholly taken up in demonstraing the goodness and the bounty of Jesus Christ, will listen with a heart and mind free from those feelings of antagonism which would certainly have been awakened by the opposite mode of proceeding; and, listening with these favourable dispositions, he will be open to the inspirations of God and the promptings of His grace. This is the course of action to be followed in this matter, as laid down by St. Francis de Sales; and no less strongly by St. Francis Borgia, in his Treatise on the Method of Preaching.

Having thus explained the general principles by which the matter of controversial sermons is to be governed, we may conclude our remarks on this subject by one or two practical suggestions or rules to be followed in this kind of preaching.

(*a.*) The first great point in controversial preaching,

as will be gathered from what has been already said, is to define and explain, with the utmost clearness and simplicity, the plain, naked, Catholic truth, without the addition of one word which may directly savour of controversy:—"You cannot conceive," says St. Francis of Sales to M. de Belley, "how beautiful the truths of our holy faith are when we consider them in a spirit of peace and tranquillity. We smother them when we labour to over-adorn them, and we hide them when we strive to bring them too prominently forward. To propose these truths with the utmost simplicity is one of the most efficacious means of persuading, provided that our hearers do not resist the Holy Ghost. If the Holy Ghost do not illumine the soul with its supernatural light, all our proofs are feeble and useless, and we only place obstacles to the interior action of the spirit when we heap proof upon proof, and argument upon argument.

(*b.*) Having exposed, clearly and simply, the article of faith in question; having established it by proofs that are equally clear, logical, and invincible; we must then proceed to demolish those objections which are advanced against it; and, here, the *indirect* method of controversial preaching comes into play with the fullest and most complete effect.

If it be unadvisable to bring Catholic doctrine before our hearers as a matter of controversy; it is, as a general rule which suffers scarcely any exception, unwarrantable to lay those objections which are advanced against it, in their naked deformity before our audience; we must not seem to suppose that there is any objection

which can be brought against the truth which we preach; but we must advance that truth, and explain it in such a manner, as to anticipate the objections of the unbeliever; and if these objections are drawn from a text of Scripture, or from the writings of a Father, we must, as can nearly always be done, employ this same text to prove the truth which we aspire to establish.[1]

The reasonableness of this mode of proceeding is sufficiently plain. It is nearly always dangerous to propose in its naked deformity an objection against the truth. Putting aside the fact that it is often much easier, from the very nature of error, to propose a specious objection than to find a clear and convincing answer to it, it is certain that the simple faith of undoubting souls is scandalized, as we have already shown, by the bringing forward of these arguments and objections. Besides, it seems to come naturally to a man to attend a great deal more carefully to the objection proposed than to the answer given to it; and not rarely, the very proposing of an objection appears to set one on the *qui vive* to find a flaw in the solution.

For these, and for many other obvious reasons, the indirect method of refuting an objection is still more useful and more obligatory than the indirect method

[1] Non ità proponantur argumenta ut simpliciores offendi possint; sed eo pacto res exponatur ut illi ex datâ explicatione solutionem eorum quæ sibi in mentem venerint aut ab aliis audiverint, facilè colligant.

Regulæ Societatis Jesu.

of proposing Catholic truth. We may again illustrate this matter by an example.

There is no objection which is more commonly advanced by Protestants against the doctrine of the Real Presence than that which is founded on the text: "Spiritus est qui vivificat, caro non prodest quidquam." Now, the prudent and discreet preacher will not adduce this text as containing a difficulty against the Catholic doctrine; but, he will bring it forward as actually proving that doctrine; and thus he will refute, although indirectly, still in the most powerful and efficacious manner, the pretended objection. It is the Spirit and the Divinity, he may say, that vivifies the sacred flesh of the Redeemer, which, without the hypostatic union with the Divinity, could not impart saving grace to the souls of men. Or, he may put his remarks in the form employed by St. Augustine: "Oh, how gross and unworthy of the majesty of this sacred mystery," exclaims the saint, "were the sentiments of the people of Capharnaum, who appeared to believe that Jesus Christ was about to break His flesh into fragments, that He might give it to them to eat. How much more beautiful, how much more worthy of God and of man is the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is this alone of which the Saviour approves, since He Himself declares that the gross and carnal meaning of the people of Capharnaum is false and profitless. *Caro non prodest quidquam.*"

Thus, by a little skill, prudence, and study, the preacher may disguise every objection, and turn that which seemed to be a difficulty into an absolute proof

in support of his doctrine. This was the method invariably followed by St. Francis de Sales, and it was crowned with the most complete success, the conversion of many thousands of heretics bearing ample testimony to its efficacy. "The saint preached in this manner," writes M. de Belley, "every Advent and every Lent, in Grenoble, where there was a large number of Protestants, who attended his discourses much more regularly and attentively than those of their own preachers, because, as they said, they never witnessed in him that spirit of strife and of angry contention which seemed to animate the tongues of their ministers. Nevertheless, he invariably employed the first part of his discourse in unfolding the truths of the Catholic faith, but according to the method which I have described. The second part he devoted to morals and piety. The Protestants, not perceiving the address of his method, were lost in continual astonishment when they found that he proved the doctrines of the Catholic Church from the very same texts which their ministers adduced as overthrowing them. In drawing his proofs for the support of the truth from the very objections of the heretics, he thus changed the war from an offensive into a defensive one, and by this means won his adversaries even whilst he vanquished them."

(*c.*) On those occasions when either charity or necessity imposes upon us the obligation of attacking, even indirectly, the religious belief of those who are opposed to us, we must take care to do so with all charity and sweetness, giving utterance to no word which can offend our neighbour. Those insulting apostrophes,

those invectives and reproaches, those stinging words, those defiances hurled at an adversary, can never be blessed of God, since they are born of pride and self-esteem. M. de Belley writes of St. Francis that the tender sentiments which filled his heart were painted on his features, and expressed in his voice, his gestures, and his entire bearing. He thus caused himself to be listened to favourably, and then his learning quickly completed the victory which his sweetness had already begun.

"I never knew, and I never heard of any heretic being converted," says St. Vincent de Paul, "except by sweetness and humility." And what the saint says of the unbeliever may be applied with equal justice to the sinner. If we wish to lead sinners back again to their outraged God, we must seek to gain their hearts, and not to confound them. We must exhibit ourselves to them, not as an adversary who seeks to gain a victory over them, but as a father who loves them, and who only seeks to gain them *because* he loves them. There is at the bottom of every man's heart a feeling which revolts against any assumption of authority over him, and the young preacher should persuade himself that nothing will be more prejudicial to his success, over either the unbeliever or the sinner, than that practice of *scolding* in which some are too apt to indulge. The spirit of God is charity and love, and the preaching of the gospel is only the development of that divine spirit. It must therefore be successful in proportion as it is in harmony with the charity and the love of God.

III. In advancing his proofs in support of the great Christian truths, the preacher should take much care to bring out prominently the beauty, the majesty, and the sanctity of the Christian doctrine upon the point in question, and to show the intimate congruity which there is between the Catholic dogma and the goodness, mercy, and wisdom of God. The dry proofs which the theologian advances will not unfrequently find the minds of his hearers prejudiced beforehand against those dogmas which are hard to believe, or from which consequences naturally flow which are very painful to flesh and blood to reduce to practice. But if these dogmas are brought before him in such a manner as to challenge his admiration and his love, he will, on the contrary, conceive for them such favourable sentiments as will predispose him to receive with joy and gladness those proofs which may be advanced in support of them.

For example. If, having to prove the divine institution of the Sacrament of Penance, we confine ourselves to those dry arguments which establish this dogma, self-love, terrified at the sight of the humiliations which are imposed upon it by this sacrament, will immediately begin to seek for pretexts to enable it to avoid this unpleasant duty. But if, instead of taking this course, we show him that this sacrament is in reality the most striking manifestation of the infinite mercy of God, who merely requires the confession of our faults that He may pardon them, no matter how numerous or how grievous they may be—if we show him that this sacrament is the crowning work of the divine wisdom, the most powerful

check upon unruly passions, the safest guarantee of perseverance in good, the source of wise counsels, the surest means of guarding against, or of repairing the wounds which we incur in our warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil, the most infallible way of securing the peace which flows from a good conscience, the sinner is gained at once. He sees how much God consulted for the interests of the sinner in instituting this sacrament, and he is filled with gratitude. Almost before the proofs on which it rests have been advanced, he gives in his adhesion to a dogma at once so beautiful and so consoling. He listens to us with the desire to believe, and he believes.

Such was the method followed by those great saints of whom we have just spoken, and by all those who have been remarkable for the success of their apostolic labours. This, too, is the method followed by St. Thomas Aquinas, who, in nearly all the subjects which he treats, lays himself out to show how intimately the truth which he establishes is worthy of God and of man.

And this, too, is the method which will be followed by every preacher who rightly appreciates his relations with the weak, the doubting, or the erring, and who knows how to seize the opportunities which are certain to fall within his grasp.

IV. Having established the dogma in question by solid proofs, the preacher will, in conclusion, be ever most solicitous to deduce those pious affections, and those practical resolutions, which will make his hearers better men. These pious affections have a wonderful influence in paving the way for persuasion, since they

help to write the truths of God, not only on the mind, but on the heart which is the seat of justifying faith. *Corde creditur ad justitiam.*

Moreover, as every dogma of our religion supposes as a necessary consequence some obligation to be fulfilled, it is plain that the preacher who does not inspire his hearers with the resolution of discharging faithfully their sacred obligations has only half done his work. It is, doubtless, a most useful and a most necessary thing to enlighten the understanding, but, after all, it is only a means by which to influence the will to good; and the preacher loses at least a great part of the fruit of his discourse when he does not conclude it with such a warm and fervent exhortation as may effectually move his hearers to the reformation of their lives, and to the practice of every Christian virtue which becomes their calling and profession.

SECTION III.

The Christian Truths from a Moral Point of View— General Rules by which Discourses of the Kind are to be Governed.

We have considered the obligation and the advantages of bringing the great Christian truths before our hearers, from a dogmatic point of view. But, it is neither less useful nor less obligatory, to develop these same great truths from what is technically called the moral point of view.

The moral sermon is one in which the preacher proposes to himself to develop some subject in such a manner as to bring it before his audience as containing a principle of Christian obligation, a motive for the practise of virtue, or the avoiding of vice. Dogmatic sermons are, as we have already shown, not only useful, but absolutely necessary in their own time and place; but the moral sermon is still more necessary, especially in those countries where heresy or indifference has taken hold of a people. St. Francis de Sales does not hesitate to affirm that the moral discourse, when properly prepared, is a more efficacious weapon for the conversion of the heretic, than even the dogmatic or controversial sermon. "It appears to me," he says, "that the Christian pulpit has been established to lead men to salvation by persuading them to the practice of virtue, and not by disputation or by controversy. . . . Sermons on moral subjects," he continues, "animated by devotion and fervour, appear to me much better adapted, not only for the conversion of sinners, but even of heretics, than all the sharpness, the logical acumen, and the bitterness of controversy. The flies which turn away from vinegar are easily attracted by honey or by sugar. It is thirty-three years since God called me to break the bread of His word to the people; and during this time I have always remarked that moral sermons, when treated with piety and zeal, have been as burning coals cast into the face of the Protestants who assisted at them. I have remarked, too, that they have always received these discourses in very good part; that they have gone away edified, and that they have been more

docile and tractable when we have come to discuss those points on which they differ from us."

It is evident that the great Christian truths must ever furnish the surest foundation on which to build up the moral discourse, since these truths contain an inexhaustible source of most useful instruction, of most pious affections, and of most holy and generous resolutions, for him who makes them the subject of his earnest and prayerful meditation. The more intimately we appreciate these great truths, the more holy we become; and it is impossible to consider them in the spirit of faith without reproaching ourselves for our failings, without feeling ourselves more powerfully moved to the practice of virtue. These truths are, as we have just said, the surest foundation of the moral discourse, since they contain at once the motive, the sanction, and the example, for the practise of virtue; whilst, at the same time, they cause us to feel most intimately its hidden charm in teaching us the beauty and the advantage of abnegation, of suffering, of humiliation, and even of death.

We shall, therefore, in the present section briefly consider the manner in which the Christian truths are to be treated, from a moral point of view. And we shall best secure this end by glancing at the general principles which should regulate the composition of the moral discourse :—

In the first place, the preacher should, in a sermon of this kind, take especial care to determine most clearly, from the very outset, the *precise end* which he wishes to attain, and direct all his efforts to its attainment.

He must bear in mind that the morality of a Christian discourse is altogether different from that which is employed by the philosopher, who relies merely upon the light of human reason. The morality of the Christian discourse is founded upon dogma, and this fact should be evidently seen in every part of the sermon. We preach the word of God, and hence the materials which we employ, and the motives which we bring forward, must rest upon the great truths of revelation, and upon the consideration of the effects of virtue or of vice, as they are described in Holy Writ.

In the moral discourse the preacher must be rigorously exact in the general principles which he lays down, and in their application to particular cases. This exactness is equally opposed to the two extremes of laxity and rigidity. By laxity of doctrinal teaching the sinner is hardened in his crimes, and lulled in a false security which is most perilous to his eternal interests. By undue rigidity, on the other hand, timorous souls are discouraged and filled with apprehensions, and led to believe that the discharge of their essential duties is an impossibility; or, what is quite as likely, they are thrown into that most terrible of all states in which the Christian soul can find itself, the state of scrupulosity.

In the moral sermon the preacher must be careful not to delay too long upon mere theory, but to enter as soon as possible into the consideration of practical details. After having devoted sufficient time to the explanation and development of his subject, he should proceed at once to its moral application. This is the

principal end of his discourse, which should ever aim, in the first place, at those matters which are most useful for the salvation of his hearers; since we necessarily suppose that the habitual and never-failing desire of the zealous pastor's heart is the salvation of souls.

The continual tendency of the moral discourse should be to excite sorrow for sin. This tendency may, of course, show itself more or less prominently, but still it will ever be the pervading element of the sermon. This salutary sorrow for and hatred of sin may be excited in a thousand ways; by showing how terrible are the judgments of God, and how He will take vengeance in His justice upon those who refuse to avail themselves of His mercy and His goodness; how merciful and forgiving He is to those who return to Him in humility and penance; how fearful is the state of the soul which has lost its God, and lost Him for eternity; in fine, the extravagance and the madness of slighting eternity, or of throwing it away for the false and fleeting pleasures of the world. With this ever-pervading sorrow for sin the preacher should sedulously mingle in his discourse sentiments of hope, of consolation, and of trust in the mercy of God. We may, without rashness, lay it down as a general rule, that for one sinner who is led back to his duty by the fear of hell, numbers will be efficaciously moved to sorrowing penance by the thought of God's never-failing mercy, His tender compassion for the sinner, and his readiness to receive those who are willing to return to Him, no matter how long or how grievously they may have wandered away from Him.

Finally, the preacher should frequently, in his moral sermon, recommend and dwell upon those practices of devotion which have most influence in sanctifying souls; "these practices," says St. Liguori, "furnish the soul with the most efficacious means of persevering in the state of grace."

With this brief consideration of the general principles to be observed in the moral discourse, which are substantially taken from the valuable work of M. Van Hemel,[1] we will now proceed to treat of the Christian truths in detail, and of the manner in which they are to be employed by the preacher, and rendered subservient to the great end of all his labours, the salvation of the souls for whom his Master died.

[1] Précis de Rhétorique Sacrée, par J. B. Van Hemel.

CHAPTER III.

METHOD OF PREACHING ON THE ATTRIBUTES AND DIVINE PERFECTIONS OF GOD—EXAMPLES.

WE have said that the great Christian truths may be classed, in a general way, under the heads of the Divine Perfections and Attributes of God, the Benefits of the Creator to the Creature, and the Four Last Things; and we now proceed to consider each of these subjects in detail.

It is the duty of the pastor of souls frequently to speak to his people on the perfections and the attributes of God, and to show them how the principle of all their obligations, and the motives for all the virtues which they are bound to practise, are contained in their proper appreciation of these divine perfections. God is not known! The world wilfully, with more or less of malice, ignores its God, His divine perfections, and unchangeable attributes, and deifies the threefold concupiscence which it worships in place of its Creator. To this ignorance is to be attributed all the evils which desolate the earth. "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart."[1] God is not known; and, therefore, love grows cold, and malice rears its foul front unblushingly,

[1] Jer. xii. 11.

Hence it is that Jesus Christ lays down the knowledge of God as the very key to the kingdom of heaven. "*Hæc est vita æterna, ut cognoscant Te, solum Deum verum;*"[1] and hence it is, too, that the zealous pastor will labour unceasingly to make his people know their God; that, knowing Him, they may love and serve Him, and thus gain the end of their creation. The following suggestions will be found practically useful in preaching on these most important subjects:—

I. The preacher should use his utmost endeavours to inspire the people with a most elevated idea of the greatness of God, and hence, he should never speak of Him unless with the most profound respect. It is said that the philosopher, Newton, never mentioned the name of God without uncovering his head. Whether we speak professedly of the greatness of God, or whether we only mention Him incidentally in the course of our instruction, we should do so with equal reverence; and this exhibition of reverence and respect on the part of their pastor, will most effectually teach his people to adore their Creator, and to humble themselves before Him, will render them obedient to His commandments, submissive to the decrees of Providence, and respectful towards His Adorable Name, which they will then fear to employ so lightly, and utter with so little reverence. It is truly painful to walk along the streets of our cities and towns, and to hear the Adorable Name of God bandied about from mouth to mouth, as if it were the name of some mean reptile, instead of the Creator of heaven and earth. It is more painful still,

[1] Joan. xvii. 3.

to hear that name so often blasphemed, even by the lips of children, who copy, only too faithfully, the evil example which is set before them by their parents in this respect. This positive blasphemy, this light and unworthy use of His holy name, is an evil which cries aloud to God for vengeance, and an evil which the zealous pastor of souls will ever labour most earnestly to remedy. Hence, as we have just said, he will never use this Holy Name unless with the most profound respect. He will labour to inspire his people with an intimate appreciation of the great truth contained in those words of Holy Writ, *Quis ut Deus!* He will understand the immense importance of inspiring his people with this sovereign esteem of God, and he will best gain his end by laying before them, in accents animated by faith, and with a demeanour full of reverential love, the Omnipotence, the Greatness, the Holiness, the Eternity of God, and those divine perfections, which are incomprehensible, simply because they are Infinite. He will show them the angels lost in the sense of their own nothingness before the majesty of God. He will tell them of those countless hosts whom St. John saw prostrate upon their faces in awful adoration before His throne; and he will do all this with such respectful veneration of word and of act, as may most efficaciously inspire his hearers with reverential awe and dread of the infinite majesty of their Creator.

II. Whilst he labours to inspire his people with this sovereign esteem of the greatness of God, he ought to lay himself out, still more earnestly, to represent Him

as infinitely to be loved, infinitely to be feared. Love and fear are the two sentiments which are most powerful in their influence over, as they are most necessary in the right regulation of, the heart of man. By love we are drawn to God. By fear we are deterred from indulging in those passions which separate us from Him. And it will be very easy for the preacher to discover in the Divine perfections those considerations and arguments which will be most powerful to excite these sentiments of love and fear. What is more easy than to show that God is infinitely worthy to be loved, since He is infinitely perfect, our Father, and the centre of all our joys! What more easy than to show that He is infinitely to be feared, since He is to be our judge; a judge infinitely holy, who can tolerate nothing that is sullied by the stain of sin; a judge infinitely terrible, who holds in His hand the irrevocable sentence of our eternal happiness or woe!

III. In treating the Divine Perfections, the preacher should dwell principally upon those which are imitable, proposing them to his people as the great models of all that is most magnificent and sublime in the Christian life. Since God has created us to His own image and likeness, it is the great object of religion to perfect this likeness in our souls. We are the children of God, and therefore we ought to show ourselves worthy of our Father. And, therefore, the preacher should carefully bring the Divine Perfections of their heavenly Father before His children. He should dwell upon the mercy of God, with all the abundance of its riches, saying in the words of Jesus Christ: *Estote misericordes sicut et*

Pater vester misericors est.[1] Upon His sanctity, as put before us in His own divine words: *Sancti estote, quoniam ego sanctus sum.*[2] Upon His patience, which bears with all the sins of men; upon His sweetness, which is never disturbed; upon His goodness, which turns evil itself into good, and which with a love that is more than maternal in its tenderness, heaps His benefits upon His creatures: in fine, the preacher should love to portray these Divine Perfections of his Lord and his God, and to show the obligation which all men are under of approaching as closely as possible to the imitation of the model set before them: *Estote perfecti sicut et Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est.*[3]

IV. Practically, a discourse on any of the Divine Perfections may be composed in either of two ways.

The first method is, to explain and establish the Perfection in question in the first point, which will then be purely dogmatical; and to develop in the second point, which will be moral, the special fruits which we should derive from the consideration of it. Ex. g.

First Point. God is present everywhere.

Second Point. The obligations which are necessarily imposed upon us by the omnipotence of God.

Or, to use another example.

First Point. There is a Providence which watches over each one of us.

Second Point. What are our obligations towards this Providence?

The second method is, to include the fruits, affections,

[1] Luc. vi. 36. [2] Lev. xi. 44. [3] Matth. v. 48.

and pious practices to be elicited, in the enunciation of the Perfection itself. Ex. g.:—

First Point. The presence of God is a powerful motive to avoid sin.

Second Point. To arrive in a short time at perfection. Following this method, Bourdaloue has the following beautiful and artistic division in his sermon on the feast of the Purification.

First Point. God has an *essential* dominion over us, which we are bound to acknowledge by a sincere oblation of ourselves to Him.

Second Point. He has a *universal* dominion over us, which we are bound to acknowledge by an entire oblation of ourselves to Him.

Third Point. An *eternal* dominion over us, which binds us to a prompt oblation of ourselves to Him.

Each one will follow his own taste in this matter; but this second method of preaching upon the Divine Perfections would seem to be more generally useful, since it proposes to the people, with the greater clearness, the special fruits which they should derive from the discourse, each proposition of the division indicating what is to be done, and what is to be avoided.

The young preacher may consult, with great profit, upon this subject: The Sacred Scriptures, and more especially the writings of the Prophets; Bossuet's *Elévations sur les Mystères;* Avrillon's *Réflexions sur les Attributs de Dieu;* any good theological treatise, *De Deo* and *De Attributis Dei.*

CHAPTER IV.

DISCOURSES ON THE BENEFITS OF GOD —TWO PRINCIPAL METHODS OF ARRANGING THEM.

BY the benefits of God, we understand His Providence over His creatures, the Incarnation, the Redemption, Divine Grace, the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance, and, in one word, all those favours and bounties which the Creator has heaped, and is heaping, upon His creatures, whether these favours come to us as the manifestation of His own divine attributes, as the fruits of the Incarnation and death of His Son, or as the effects of the Sacraments which He has instituted for the benefit of mankind.

It is as useful, as it is obligatory, to preach often upon the benefits of God, that we may thus awaken in the hearts of our people an intimate appreciation of the favours which God is ever pouring upon them, and of the obligations which they, in turn, lie under towards Him. Treating of one of these benefits, St. Liguori thus writes to a missionary priest: "I charge you," he says, "to speak often of the love which Jesus Christ has manifested towards us in the institution of the Adorable Sacrament, and of the duty which we, in turn, owe our most amiable Redeemer. Those resolu-

tions, which are the effect of the fear of chastisement rather than of the love of God, will not be very firm."

There are two principal methods of treating these divine benefits, both of which are equally practical and useful.

I. The first method is to show, in the first point of the discourse, the *greatness* of the benefit bestowed; and, in the second point, the *obligations* which flow from its reception; or, in other words, the appreciation which it ought to produce in us.

In order to inspire our hearers with a becoming idea of the *greatness* of the benefit of which we treat, we may, in the first point, consider it from a threefold point of view: the benefit in itself, in Him who bestows it, and in him who receives it.

(*a*) *The benefit in itself.*—And we cause our audience to estimate it at its proper value by showing how excellent it is in its very nature, how useful and how necessary to us, and (when there is place for this argument) how frequently it is bestowed upon us.

(*b*) *In Him who bestows it.*—And here we may show, on the one hand, the infinite dignity of our benefactor, who, so to speak, lays this benefit at our feet; and, on the other, the price which it has cost Him, and the more than paternal affection with which He bestows it upon us.

(*c*) *In him who receives it.*—And in this place, we may show that the recipient is a person who not only has not merited such a favour, but who, on the contrary, has shown himself infinitely unworthy of it, as well by the outrages which he has committed against his

benefactor, as by the indifference which he has shown in regard to the favours bestowed upon him.

These three considerations may be most easily developed by means of the well-known verse which is specially useful in considering the Sacred Passion of Christ, and such kindred subjects, viz.: *Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando.*

(*a*) *Quis?*—The higher the dignity of him who bestows it, the greater is the value of his gift; hence, the gift of a king to his subject is much more highly esteemed than that of an equal to an equal.

(*b*) *Quid?*—What the benefit is in itself, in its advantages, and in its results.

(*c*) *Ubi?*—To whom has it been given—to a rebellious and ungrateful subject, and to one who was well known to be such.

(*d*) *Quibus auxiliis?*—The means which have been employed in order that we might receive this benefit, suppose an infinite bounty and generosity on the part of the giver.

(*e*) *Cur?*—Through pure love, since so far from the donor being under any obligation to bestow it, there was every reason why he should withhold this benefit.

(*f*) *Quomodo?*—The circumstances which surround this benefit, the manner in which it is bestowed, reveal still more and more the generosity and the tenderness of our Divine benefactor.

(*g*) *Quando?*—The time in which we receive it, furnishes still another proof of the greatness of this grace, &c., &c.

In order to impress our hearers with a deep sense of

the *obligations* which are imposed upon them by the reception of the grace or favour in question, we may in the second point lay before them such considerations as the following:—

(*a*) That we are bound to love and to return frequent thanks to our benefactor; that we should fear to offend Him; that we should seek to please Him in all things; that we should desire, in as far as we are able, to render Him good for good, and to do as much for Him, if that were possible, as He has done for us.

(*b*) That we are bound to watch, with the utmost care and solicitude, over the benefit which we have received; to hold it in the highest esteem; and, above all, to employ it according to the intention of the donor.

II. The second method of treating the benefits of God is to insert the moral conclusion, which we wish to deduce, in the proposition itself. Ex. g.:—Suppose that we are preaching upon Creation, we may thus divide and announce our subject:

First Point. By my creation God is the author of my being; therefore, I am bound to obey Him.

Second Point. He has made me for Himself; therefore, I am bound to tend to Him.

Third Point. He has made me to His own image and likeness; therefore, I am bound to imitate Him.

Or, another method:

First Point. By my creation, God is my master; therefore, I am bound to serve Him.

Second Point. He is my Father; therefore, I am bound to love and honor Him.

By one or other of these methods the young preacher may readily treat any of the benefits of God. The ideas thrown out in this chapter are extremely simple; but it will be seen, at a glance, that they admit of infinite amplification and practical development; and by a careful application of these, or similar considerations, the preacher cannot fail to give a useful and interesting discourse.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

SECTION I.

General Principles to be kept in mind when treating these Great Subjects.

WE have already dwelt on the necessity of preaching frequently on these great fundamental truths. If we could only succeed in persuading men that they are not to die as the brute beasts of the field, but that at the supreme moment in which they give up their breath they are to enter upon a new life of eternal happiness, or of eternal woe, according as they have conducted themselves in this, we should have done nearly all that is needed to dissipate the errors of the world, and to break down that rampart, so dense and impenetrable, which passion and sin are ever raising up between man and his God. Faith has become obscured, and love has grown cold, and hence, men neither believe as they ought, nor live as they ought. But how is the spark of faith, which may yet be alive, to be stirred up into a vigorous flame; how is the love, which has grown so cold, to be again awakened and reanimated with an ever-living, ever-speaking, horror of sin; unless by

inspiring men with an intimate appreciation of these awful truths, Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell! These are the most potent means in the hands of the zealous priests for stirring up those salutary sentiments of love and fear, of which we have already spoken; and hence the obligation incumbent upon every pastor of souls of frequently treating these great truths, and of treating them well. "Memorare novissima tua, et non peccabis in æternum."[1]

In order to treat these great subjects efficaciously and well, the preacher must, in the first place, meditate upon them until his own heart becomes vividly touched with a sense of their reality and their infinite importance, so that he may take with him into the pulpit such a lively faith as will animate his every word, his every gesture, nay, every tone of his voice, and thus carry conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He who speaks in the pulpit as coldly and as indifferently of these great truths as if they were matters of but small moment, takes from them a great part, if not all the effect they should produce upon his flock, and which they would infallibly produce, if he himself believed them as he ought, and thus believing them, treated them in a worthy and becoming manner. Nay, it is little less than scandalous to appear before one's people with that self-satisfied demeanour, and to speak of these tremendous truths with the cold indifferent voice which reveals, but too plainly, that we neither appreciate as we ought, nor feel as we ought, those awful doctrines, which we

[1] Eccli. vii. 40.

profess to preach. It is true, of course, that a man may be cold by nature; that he may be hard to move, and little susceptible of those more tender feelings which animate the souls of others, and awaken them into life; but the priest must be cold indeed, hard indeed, and very dead indeed to that living fire which animates and vivifies the soul of the apostle, if he cannot be stirred up to something like animation and life by the terrible thoughts of the things to come, of Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell! Such a one may be a holy man; but, in truth, his holiness is of a very different type from that of a St. Jerome or a St. Francis Xavier.

In the second place, in preaching on these great truths, the pastor of souls must clearly propose to himself some specific end, some definite point to be gained, which shall make itself clearly seen, and no less clearly felt, through the whole course of the sermon, and which shall bring forth plain and unmistakable fruit to the sanctification of men's lives. The fear which is awakened by the consideration of the Last Things is surely a holy and a salutary one; but the preacher who should rest satisfied, and think that everything was gained, when he had succeeded in exciting it, would greatly mistake the end which should be before him. Such fear is only truly salutary when it leads men to reform their lives, and thus gain the end for which they were created. Massillon, who is so admirable from many points of view, often fails in this. He fills his hearers with the terrors of God's judgments; but he leaves them in that state. Bourdaloue, on the

contrary, does not content himself with inspiring his hearers with these salutary fears, but he labours with equal earnestness to lay before them the means by which they may escape from the dangers which threaten them; and on this account, he is a safer model to take than Massillon in studying these subjects.

With these general remarks, we shall now proceed to consider the Last Things of man in detail, briefly pointing out the errors to be avoided, and the method to be followed in treating these subjects.

SECTION II.

Method of Preaching on the Necessity of Salvation. Points to be Contained, Explicitly or Implicitly, in every Good Discourse on this Subject.

The necessity of salvation, or, in other words, of gaining the end of his creation, may be well said to be the fundamental truth which man is bound to believe, and to reduce to practice; since it is only labour thrown away to preach on those other great kindred subjects, unless we can first succeed in inspiring our hearers with lively faith in this.

I. In treating this subject, the young preacher is very apt to fall into several mistakes. In the first place, he often fritters away his time, and exhausts the patience of his hearers by his tedious history of all that God has done for man, from the moment of creation down to the present. It is quite true that, in order to inspire our hearers with a lively appreciation of the

importance of saving their souls, nothing can be more useful than to show all that God has done for man; but this narration of the benefits of God to his creatures should be brief, dealing with great truths and broad principles, and, above all, interspersed with applications and inductions against the sinner who refuses to correspond with the views of God. For example: after a brief view of the designs of God in creating man, he may put the case in this way:—"Salvation is the most important of your affairs; or, you have no affair which is really so. In creating man, God has made all things else subservient to this; therefore, either God has acted unreasonably, or, we are fools in neglecting to save our souls. But you say," we may continue, "that the sacrifices which are required from you in order to save your souls, are very painful. Our answer is, to tell you to look upon Jesus Christ in the Garden of Olives, tied to the pillar and cruelly scourged, crowned with thorns, hanging upon the cross," &c. &c.

The second error into which many fall consists in running off into long descriptions of heaven, or of hell, when preaching on this subject of Salvation. Now these matters are vastly too important in themselves, and far too difficult to treat to be made merely *portions* of a sermon on another subject. Besides, they are more or less out of place in such a discourse, since our object is not to preach on heaven or hell, but to inspire our hearers with a great and efficacious desire of saving their souls.

The third mistake, and it is one into which young preachers are [illegible] liable to fall, is to speak without

due moderation, and with extreme rigour, of such subjects as the small number of the elect, final impenitence, the danger of delaying one's conversion, relapses into sin, &c., &c. By speaking with undue severity on these subjects, we probably drive sinners into despair, and seriously disturb that peace of mind which is one of God's choicest gifts to those who are striving to serve Him. Such sermons are productive of much more harm than good. St. Francis of Sales, who is such a safe model for the young priest in all these matters, was accustomed, when preaching on this subject, to show that all his hearers might save their souls if they would only take a very little trouble, and that salvation was only a matter of difficulty to those who did not care for it.

II. Every good sermon on Salvation ought to contain, implicitly or explicitly, the two following points:

First. That we must occupy ourselves seriously, and from this very day, with the affair of our salvation:

Second. That we must take the necessary means of securing it.

In the first point, the preacher should dwell upon the following ideas, and develop them more or less fully, as his experience may suggest.

(*a*) The affair of salvation is most *important*. (We may prove this from the sentiments of the reprobate, of the saints, and of God himself.)

(*b*) It is most *necessary*. (It cannot be eluded; we cannot escape eternal happiness or eternal woe. *In aterutram æternitatem cadam necesse est.*)

(*c*) It is *personal*. (There is no question here of

mere honors, riches, &c. There *is* question of oneself, and of a matter which no man can do by proxy.)

(*d*) It is *urgent.* (We know not the day nor the hour of our death.)

(*e*) It is *worthy* of our utmost efforts. (It demands these efforts, and it is worthy of them.)

In the second point, we may indicate the means to be taken by showing:

(*a*) The *necessity* of promptly recovering, and of maintaining ourselves in the grace of God.

(*b*) The *necessity* and *means* of rendering all our actions and undertakings, our recreations and our use of the things of this world, subservient to the great object of securing our salvation. These are the principles and the rules of conduct which should be the natural results of every truly effective sermon on this great subject.

The following are amongst some of the most practically useful works on this subject: *Traité de l'Importance du Salut,* par le P. Rapin; *Le Guide des Pécheurs,* livre ii.; *Avent et Carême,* par le P. Giroust; the 22nd and 58th Homilies of St. Chrysostom to the people of Antioch; and St. Augustine's Sermon (64), *De verbis Domini.*

SECTION III.

Death. Errors to be Avoided, and Methods which may be followed in Treating this Subject.

In his sermon on the death of the sinner, Brydayne, the great French preacher, lays down this proposition:

"That as a man lives, so he will die: if he lives in sin, he will die in sin;" and devotes all the efforts of his undoubted eloquence to the sustaining of it.

Now this mode of treatment takes it for granted that it is impossible for a man who has lived badly to die well; and this is not strictly true. It also places limits to the mercy of God, and is much more likely to throw the sinner into despair than to lead to his conversion. For these reasons, such a mode of treating this great subject would seem to be faulty, and yet it is one which young preachers frequently adopt. A second error into which they fall is, in taking a great deal of pains to describe the anguish, the remorse, and the despair of the dying sinner; but, however powerful such a description may be, can we say that, now-a-days at least, it is founded on fact. On the contrary, does not our experience rather go to show that, strange as it may seem, the greatest sinners often die in the greatest tranquillity, and with the greatest insensibility to the most lively exhortations which may be addressed to them. A third error consists in striving elaborately to prove from Scripture, from tradition, and from reason, the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of the moment when it may come to us. What need is there to prove these things? They are admitted, willingly or unwilling, by all the world; and, although it may, doubtless, be useful and commendable to remind the sinner of these great truths from time to time, it seems to be simply ridiculous to endeavour to prove them as propositions which can be called into doubt.

Such are some of the leading mistakes into which the young preacher is liable to fall when preaching on death.

There are four principal methods of presenting this subject, according to the end which the speaker proposes to himself.

I. If his great object be to prevail upon his hearers to prepare themselves to *die well*, he may thus divide his subject:—

First Point. The necessity of preparing for death.

Second Point. The means of preparing for it.

He may prove the first point. (*a*) From the immeasurable and irreparable evil of dying without preparation. (*b*) From the palpable danger of incurring this great misfortune if we live without thinking of it. (*c*) From the difficulty of preparing ourselves to die well if we defer this preparation to the hour of our death.

He may establish the second point by showing. (*a*) That we ought, from this very moment, to arrange all our affairs, and to put our conscience in that state in which we shall wish to be found at the hour of death. (*b*) That we ought to perform each one of our actions as if we were presently to die. (*c*) That we ought never to remain for one moment in a state in which we should not wish to be found at our death.

II. If he rather aspire to *detach the hearts of his hearers from the things of the world*, and to lead them to a high degree of sanctity, he may announce his subject as follows:

First Point. The certainty of death ought to detach us from all the things of the world.

Second Point. The uncertainty of the time of our death ought to inspire us with a continual vigilance to preserve ourselves in such a state as to be always ready to appear before God.

III. If he propose to himself to *form his hearers to the practice of all Christian virtues*, the preacher may present death to them. (*a*) As a motive of humility. (*b*) As an infallible rule for securing Christian prudence. (*c*) As a most efficacious means of preserving themselves in a state of fervour. These three points admit of almost infinite amplification and development. The first of them is beautifully treated by Bossuet in his sermon for the Friday in the fourth week of Lent.

IV. If the preacher desire, as the end of his discourse, *to dissipate that excessive fear of death which is so unworthy of a Christian soul*, he may do so by showing that the death of the true servant of God is full of joy and consolation, both as regards the past, the present, and the future.

(*a*) *The past.* The Christian leaves without regret that which he has possessed without being attached to it. He sees himself released from the miseries of this life, and above all, about to be secured from the danger of losing God by sin.

(*b*) *The present.* The weary voyage of his mortal life has reached its termination, and he is about to enter into his everlasting rest.

(*c*) *The future.* He beholds heaven opened to him, and himself about to enter upon the possession of that eternal happiness for which he was created.

The preacher will find valuable matter on this sub-

ject in the *Traité des Quatre Fins de l'homme*, of P. Pallu; in the 4th vol. of the Moral Essays of Nicole; and in the *Retraite pour se préparer a la Mort*, of P. Nouet. Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon's works contain striking sermons bearing on this matter. Amongst the Fathers he may study with great edification and profit, St. Ambrose's *De Bono Mortis;* St. Augustine's *Speculum Peccatoris;* St. Basil's *Admonitio ad Filium Spiritualem;* and St. Gregory's seventh book of Moral Discourses.

SECTION IV.

Judgment—Practical Suggestions, and Methods of Preaching on the General or Particular Judgment.

In treating this subject the preacher is very apt to confine himself to the General Judgment, whilst the consideration of the Particular Judgment, which he thus passes over, is nevertheless one which is most interesting in itself, and wonderfully adapted to affect the individual, and move him to salutary resolutions.

In treating the General Judgment, the preacher should not endeavour to draw too much upon his imagination, as is the case with many, but build his descriptions and his deductions upon the Word of God, which is his only safe guide in this matter.

Many preachers, when handling this momentous subject, confine themselves too exclusively, if not altogether, to the judgment of the wicked. Now, if the judgment of the reprobate is very terrible, the judg-

ment of the righteous is no less consoling; and whilst there are undoubtedly many who need to be terrified by the rigours of God's judgment, there are many timorous souls who require to be strengthened and consoled. And, hence, we find that whenever our divine Lord speaks of the terrible judgment which awaits the wicked, He almost always dwells with equal emphasis upon the consolations which await the just at this supreme moment. This is the model which the young preacher should sedulously keep before his mind when preparing himself to speak on a subject so interesting in itself, and so full of terrible, but eminently practical, considerations to the children of men.

If the preacher wish to speak of the Particular Judgment he may represent the soul cited at the moment of death, before the tribunal of Christ, and may divide his subject in the following manner:

First Point. The consolation of the soul, who finds herself at this supreme moment in the state of grace.

Second Point. The despair of the soul who finds herself burdened with sin unrepented of.

He may develop the first point of the discourse by showing that everything is calculated to console the just; his judge, his very sins, his good works, his future lot.

(*a*) His Judge: for this is his dearest and best friend.

(*b*) His sins: for these are all pardoned and washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ.

(*c*) His good works: for he has the satisfaction of finding even the most humble of them written in the book of life.

(*d*) His future lot: for he is about to enter into the possession of infinite and never-ending bliss.

He may develop the second point by painting the state of horror and affright in which the sinful soul finds herself placed.

(*a*) Overwhelmed with terror, on the very instant of death she finds herself standing alone and unbefriended before her judge. And what a judge! a judge justly offended, a judge who knows the most hidden thoughts of the heart.

(*b*) She is accused of the sins she has committed, of the good she has left undone, and of the graces she has abused, &c.

(*c*) She is convicted by the devil, by her judge, nay, even by the testimony of her own conscience.

(*d*) She is condemned to that punishment which is too horrible to contemplate, and the sentence is immediately put into execution.

(*e*) The preacher may properly and efficaciously conclude his discourse with an earnest and warm exhortation to his hearers to judge themselves rigorously whilst in life, that they may escape the terrible judgment of God after their death. *Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur.*

If the preacher wish to take the General Judgment as the subject of his discourse, he may treat it as follows:

First Point. A sketch of the circumstances which will precede, accompany, and follow this judgment; dwelling especially upon those which will tend to the consolation of the just, and the confusion of the sinner.

This point when carefully amplified and developed, can be rendered extremly effective and practical.

Second Point. The joy of the just, and the despair of the reprobate, specially treated.

Another very powerful, although, for the reasons already given, less preferable way of treating this subject, is to confine the discourse to the consideration of the judgment of the sinner alone. From this point of view the sinner may be represented as standing before the judgment seat of God—*accused*, *convicted*, *and condemned.*

On this subject the works to which reference was made when treating of Death may be consulted with profit. In addition to these, the student will find valuable matter in the sermon of St. Chrysostom, *De secundo adventu Filii Dei;* in the 5th Homily on the Epistle to the Romans; in the 3rd Homily of the same saint on the second Epistle to Timothy; and in the 27th sermon of St. Bernard on the Canticle of Canticles.

SECTION V.

Hell—Special Difficulty of treating this Matter well—The Sceptic and the Tepid Christian—Three Principal Errors into which Young Preachers are apt to fall—Practical Divisions of the Subject.

In the times in which we live, we may safely say, and without fear of contradiction, that there is no subject which is more difficult to be treated from the sacred chair, than that of Hell.

In the first place, the tendency of our age is to deny the existence, or, at least, the eternity of the pains of Hell; and this, not merely by professing Christians, but even by so-called ministers of the Gospel. Hence, the obligation on the part of the pastor of souls, of establishing this truth, so repugnant in its very idea to the natural man, but so eminently practical in its consequences, by proofs which cannot be called into question, and by arguments whose solidity cannot be sneered away.

The unbeliever must be made to believe, and the faithful must be strengthened in their belief, in this great truth of the Christian faith; and the pastor of souls must spare no pains to bring this dogma home to the hearts of his hearers, that those who will not serve God through love, may at least be brought to do so by that salutary fear, which is inspired by a right conception of the terrible and eternal pains of Hell. But, whilst there can be no question as to the responsibility of the pastor of souls on this matter, it is equally true

that this subject is one which is most difficult to treat properly, and one on which very few succeed in preaching well. It is one of those great subjects in which not to succeed perfectly is almost surely the same as to fail egregiously. There are few men who have the mind to conceive the greatness of this terrible truth; fewer still who have the power to express what they have conceived. The difficulty of treating this matter is increased by the fact that the heart of man, even of the Christian man, rebels against the idea of Hell; and, hence it is that, in so many cases, it is much easier to move the sinner to repent by the consideration of the love and the mercy of God, than by the fear of punishment.

But, inasmuch as there are some who are so lost to the promptings of grace, as to be insensible to those higher inspirations of the love of God; and as there are some who obstinately refuse to give in their adhesion to this great Christian truth; the pastor is bound, by every obligation, to bring conviction to the unbeliever, and the terrors of God's judgments to the reprobate and hardened sinner. And, hence, however difficult it may be to preach properly upon this great subject, there are occasions on which he is not at liberty to pass it by in silence; occasions on which, relying upon the powerful and efficient grace of God, he must prepare himself to discharge this duty with all the zeal, the force, and the ability, which he can bring to bear upon it.

A young and inexperienced preacher is very likely to fall into three mistakes in handling the subject of Hell.

In the first place, he very probably lays himself out

to give a long and highly-wrought description of the pains and torments of the damned; a description in which he draws much more upon his own imagination than upon the Word of God, and in the development of which, he advances many assertions which rest upon very slight foundations, even if he have any authority worth mentioning for the startling picture which he sets before his hearers. Now, while it is quite certain that the most terrible description which man can give of the pains of Hell will fall infinitely short of their reality, it is equally certain that, in these days of scepticism, it is very indiscreet to lay before the unbeliever any assertion or description in this matter which cannot be solidly proved. By drawing too much upon one's imagination, or by advancing assertions which, when subjected to the keen eye of the critical and carping sceptic, cannot be readily defended and solidly maintained, we give him an undoubted advantage over us, and afford him a pretext at least, for calling into question those fundamental truths, the certainty of which is above all cavil. It is, therefore, much better, as a general rule, when treating this matter, to confine ourselves to those points which the authority of Holy Scripture, and the teaching of the Church, place before our eyes. If we attempt a laboured description of the torments of Hell, we shall most probably fail, from the very fact, that the mind of man is incapable of conceiving them. Even if we succeed, so far as the mere description is concerned, in drawing a picture which shall fill the faithful with horror and affright, we shall, in doing so, most probably advance as undoubted matters of

faith many things which are merely founded on pious belief; or we shall even go a step beyond this, and advance assertions which have no foundation, except in our own zeal, or, it may be, in our own over-heated imagination. In either case, we lay ourselves open to attacks which it may not be so easy to repel. The teachings of faith are sufficiently clear, and sufficiently terrible, on this point, to render it quite unnecessary to go beyond them. It will, as an ordinary rule, be amply sufficient, as it will be vastly more prudent, to confine ourselves to those clear and infinitely important facts which are imposed upon the Christian soul as obligatory matters of belief, viz., that there is reserved for those who are unfaithful to the end of their creation a place of infinite and unspeakable torments; a place which has been called into existence by the angry breath of an outraged God; a place to which the sinner is to be consigned for all eternity, in the company of the devil and his angels, who have been appointed his guardians and his tormentors; a place which, in one word, is known to us by the name of Hell.

Let us then, speaking in a general way, confine ourselves to the teaching of the Church on this matter. Let us bring that authoritative teaching before our hearers in plain, simple, earnest language, advancing no assertion which we cannot sustain by solid arguments, and by unassailable proofs: anticipating, in as far as may be, the objections of the scoffer and unbeliever: and we shall take the most sensible, as well as the most useful, method of preaching on Hell

Secondly.—It is not uncommon to hear a preacher

discoursing on the fearful torments of the damned, with as much unconcern, and in as cool and deliberate a manner as if he were simply proving a proposition in logic, or developing an abstract idea. He expresses, neither in his voice nor in his manner, any horror of the terrible visions which he is conjuring up, nor any sympathy with the sufferings which he so unimpassionately describes. Nay, you might even suppose him to find pleasure in the vivid description which he gives of the sufferings of his fellow-creatures—sufferings to which, if we may judge by his demeanour, there is no possibility of his ever being subjected.

But it is not thus with the true servant of God—with the man who no less tenderly loves his fellow-man, because he intimately appreciates and estimates at its true value, and in all its bearings, the claim of the Creator upon His creatures. He shrinks with horror from the very thought of the sufferings in which his unfortunate brethren are plunged. He cannot speak of them, except in accents of the deepest compassion, and of the most profound commiseration. He applies to himself those terrible truths which it is his duty to proclaim to his hearers; and while he thunders the terrors of God's judgments into the ears of the sinner, he does not attempt to conceal from them the apprehension with which his own soul is filled, lest, after preaching to them, he himself may become a cast-away.

A third mistake into which some fall, consists in overlooking, or neglecting to draw from the consideration of this terrible subject those practical conclusions

which should lead our hearers to a prompt conversion, and to an efficacious amendment of their lives. If we treat of Hell, and endeavour to describe its terrors, it is not merely that we may fill the souls of our hearers with affright, but that we may move them to do penance—that we may excite them to greater vigilance in God's service—that we may inspire them with the spirit of prayer and of all Christian virtues. We may preach, indeed, on this great subject; but if we neglect to deduce these practical consequences, our preaching will be all in vain.

From all this, two conclusions seem to follow:—

I. That it is not always advisable to dwell much upon a description of the material torments of Hell, so to speak; but, on the contrary, that it is more useful and practical to confine ourselves to what we may call the great leading ideas of this subject. The faith of our hearers is often too weak to bear the recital of those torments in which some preachers seem so well pleased to indulge. Treating the subject in this general manner, we may thus divide it:—

First Point. There is another life in which every unrepented mortal sin will be punished.

Second Point. This punishment will be eternal.

Third Point. The folly of the man who exposes himself to this punishment.

II. That there are congregations with whom, and occasions on which, we may safely go more into detail when preaching on Hell. With a truly Christian audience we may dwell upon the following points:—

First Point. The terrible fire of Hell.

Second Point. The worm of conscience.

Third Point. The eternal loss of God.

When treating our subject from this point of view we shall not, however, be less assiduous in deducing those practical conclusions at which we have already glanced.

Sometimes, instead of preaching on Hell itself, it may be useful to take, as the subject of our discourse: The thought or remembrance of Hell. We may show that this thought is most proper to inspire us: (*a*) With a great courage to overcome all our difficulties in the service of God; (*b*) With a continual watchfulness over ourselves; (*c*) With a profound humility.

In his work, *De Providentia Dei*, St. Bernard takes yet another view of this subject, and proves that God owed it to His own goodness to create Hell, since, unless this place of punishment existed, there are many who would not have the courage to make those sacrifices which are necessary in order to gain Heaven.

The writers referred to in the last section may be also profitably consulted on this subject. Amongst the Fathers the student may consult St. Gregory, *Lib.* 9, *in Job;* St. Augustine, *Lib.* 3, *De spiritu et animâ;* St. Bernard, *Ser.* 16, *in Cantic.;* and St. Chrysostom, *Hom.* 24, *in St. Matth.*, and *Hom. in* 2 *Cor.*

SECTION VI.

Heaven—Principal Methods of dividing the Subject.

No less difficult to treat than that of Hell is the subject of Heaven; and this, strange as it may seem at first sight, for the same reasons. Unable as the mind of man is to conceive the terrible torments of the damned, still less is he able, either to conceive, or to express, that torrent of delight which God has prepared for His faithful servants. Hence it is, that so few succeed, and so many utterly fail, when they essay to speak of the beauty, the glory, and the everlasting rest of Heaven.

Whilst the heart, which speaks out of its own abundance, will always speak with fruit on this great subject, since the most vivid and laboured descriptions of the glory of Heaven will fall coldly and without effect upon the ears of our audience, unless these descriptions be vivified with that life which is the offspring of Faith and of Love, we may say that there are but two principal methods of treating the subject of Heaven. These methods, however, and the divisions which naturally flow from them, afford scope for the most varied descriptions, the most telling amplification, and, above all, for the most powerful appeals to those higher feelings of Christian Love, and of Christian Hope, by which at least the greater number of men are ever most efficaciously influenced and assisted in attaining the end of their creation.

The first method of preaching on this subject is to describe in the

First Point. The glory, the felicity, the eternal beatitude, &c. &c. of the Blessed in Heaven; and in the

Second Point. To show the means by which we may arrive at the possession of this happiness.

The second method is to connect the moral deductions with the dogmatic truths, which are thus announced together, something in the following way:—

First Point. Our belief in the joys of Heaven ought to detach our hearts from all the things of the world.

Second Point. It ought to inflame us with fervour in the service of God.

Third Point. It ought to fill us with patience and courage amidst the trials of life.

Most of the works to which reference has been made at the conclusion of the preceding sections may be consulted with equal profit on this subject.

The preceding are some of the principal, and most practical methods, of treating the great subjects, generally known, as the Four Last Things. The working up of these materials, and the development of details and of circumstances, are, of course, necessarily left to the pious labours, and to the common sense which is scarcely less precious than piety, of the zealous pastor of souls.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD AND HIS BLESSED MOTHER.

SECTION I.

Obligation of entering into the Spirit of the Church in Celebrating the Great Festivals of the Christian Year—What is meant by the Mysteries, and the Means of Securing our End.

THE intention of the Church in instituting the Festivals of our Lord and His Blessed Mother, was, without doubt, that the faithful, entering into the spirit of these sacred commemorations, might be made participators in the graces and spiritual benefits which are attached to their devout celebration.

If this be so, it is evidently the duty of the pastor of souls to second and carry out the views of the Church in this matter; and animated by the desire of discharging a duty, at once so pleasing and so holy, he will understand that the natural subject of his discourse, on such a day as this, can be no other than the mystery which is celebrated. And, he will understand, too, that he does not discharge this duty by merely referring in a few passing words, stuck on either at the beginning or conclu-

sion of his discourse, to the mystery of the day. This mystery should form the subject, whole and entire, of his sermon; and he should not aim or endeavour to introduce anything which is not calculated, directly, or at least, indirectly, for the development, amplification, and practical application of the subject. In such a discourse, we may lay down as a general rule, that the dogma and history of the mystery is to take the leading part, those moral reflections which will naturally flow from the consideration of the subject presenting themselves as the legitimate and essential consequences of the great dogmatical truth contained in the mystery.

It is evident that the preacher, who neglects to avail himself of the opportunities presented to him by the recurrence of any great Festival, neglects one of the most appropriate subjects for the set sermon, and one which affords fullest scope for all that is most noble and most elevated in sacred oratory. But, passing by this consideration which, at best, is only human, it will be more profitable to dwell upon those higher motives which must surely influence the Christian priest in such a matter as this. It is impossible for him to overlook the spiritual advantages which accrue to the faithful from a devout recollection, and prayerful commemoration, of the great mysteries of the Life and Death of their Redeemer, and of His Blessed Mother. These mysteries are, in very truth, the food upon which Christian piety is nourished and sustained. They are the very foundations of Christian faith, and where the knowledge and due appreciation of these are wanting, Christian Faith will surely be wanting too. They speak

to the heart; they inflame it with loving warmth; they teach it the knowledge of all saving truth, and they win it, as they alone can win it, to the practice of self-denial and of virtue. The practical conclusions which the zealous preacher draws from the consideration of these mysteries are always natural, since there is no man so obstinate, or so ignorant, as not to understand that his practice should be in conformity with his belief.

It needs no further argument to show, that the pastor who neglects to avail himself of the recurring Festivals of the Christian year, and turn them to fullest account, can scarcely be said to be faithful, either to the design of the Church in instituting these Festivals, or to the obligations which she laid upon him when she made him the pastor of those who are to be fed with the bread of saving truth, and for whom he is to answer, even with his own soul.

Besides, on the great Festivals of the year his flock expect, as a matter of right, a discourse which shall be in harmony with the occasion. If the preacher disappoint them, he, at the very least, renders them discontented. More likely still, he does them a positive, and, it may be, grievous injury, by leaving them in ignorance of some great leading truth of their Faith. And, if there were ever a time when such a negligence was truly inexcusable, it is surely in these days in which Faith is so weak, in which Religion is so little known, and when the spirit which should be born of knowledge is either ignored, forgotten, or despised.

By mysteries we understand, in this place, those actions of our Lord which have an immediate reference

to the salvation of man: as the Nativity, the Circumcision, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, &c. We understand, too, those wonders which God has been pleased to work in the most holy Virgin, as the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity, Assumption, &c.; and those actions which she performed under divine inspiration, as the Presentation, Visitation, &c.

In these sacred subjects, the greatest doctors of the Church, and the most distinguished pulpit orators of ancient and modern times, have found scope for the highest flights of their genius, and the loftiest aspirations of their zeal. They have worked this mine with the most abundant results, but without in the least degree exhausting it, since these mysteries are the manifestations to man of the infinite wisdom and the infinite goodness of God; subjects which can never be exhausted, from the simple fact, that they are infinite. The zealous priest will labour to walk in the footsteps of the great models who are placed before him; and, as occasion presents itself, he will sedulously seize upon the festivals of the Christian year, and bring them before his flock in such a manner, as to make them participators in the abundant graces of these holy times.

In order to gain this end, he must labour: (*a*) To instruct his hearers thoroughly on the mystery in question; (*b*) He must cause them to honor it; (*c*) He must ensure, as far as lies in him, their participation in the graces which naturally flow from it; and (*d*) As a natural consequence, he must present his subject in such a manner as may best secure these ends.

SECTION II.

The Method of Instructing our Hearers thoroughly in any Mystery.

In selecting any mystery for the subject of his discourse, the first thing which the preacher naturally proposes to himself, is, to instruct his hearers thoroughly on the point in question; or, in other words, to cause them to know the mystery. In order that our people may be thus thoroughly instructed, we must explain to them the mystery on which we speak, in its exterior and interior relations. We must bring clearly before their view those perfections of God, of Jesus Christ, or of His Blessed Mother, which are manifested in this mystery, and we must expose, no less clearly, the advantages which flow to man from a devout commemoration of it.

I. We must clearly explain the mystery in its exterior and interior relations. By the *exterior* of any mystery we understand that part of it which is visible to the eyes of man; and by the *interior*, those sentiments or emotions, so to speak, which we conceive to have animated the soul of Jesus Christ, or His Mother, at the moment when the exterior part was made manifest.

The exterior of any mystery is found either in the Gospel history, or in the deposit of tradition; and it is to be laid before our hearers in all its instructive fulness, and with such an amount of amplified development as our prudence may suggest. These sacred

details are to be carefully explained, lest our hearers depart in ignorance of the mystery which they aspire to honor. They are the foundation upon which we are to build those moral conclusions which we intend to draw, and every circumstance connected with these mysteries is full of salutary instruction. Thus, for example, in the mystery of the Epiphany, the appearance of the star, the departure and return of the Magi, their offerings to the Infant, and their interview with King Herod, each and every one of these circumstances is as interesting as it is instructive, and worthy of careful development.

The interior of the mystery is no less well adapted to secure the attention and awaken the fervent piety of an audience than the exterior. We have said that by the interior part of a mystery we understand those sentiments which we conceive to have animated the sacred soul of Jesus Christ, &c., at the moment when the exterior was manifested to man. These sentiments are to be discovered in Holy Writ, in the great principles of Faith, and in fervent meditation. Thus, for example, in considering the interior of the mystery of the Epiphany, we lay before our hearers that, almost immediately after His birth, our Divine Lord began to manifest His desire for the salvation of mankind and that, for this purpose, He sent the star to summon the Magi to His crib. Through all these ages, each one may say to himself, His eye was on me. Whilst in His crib, He began to put in operation His sacred designs for my salvation. He called me to His service, not, indeed, by the instrumentality of a star, but by

reserving for me the grace of Faith—of a Christian education—and of an abundant supply of the means of salvation. Hence, I may learn something of the abundant love which Jesus has shown me in this mystery. By these, and such like simple reflections, it is easy to see how our hearers may be brought to know and to admire the mystery which is laid before them.

II. Whilst we explain the mystery in all its varied relations, we must labour, with no less earnestness, to bring clearly into view those perfections of God, of Jesus Christ, or of His Blessed Mother, which are manifested in it.

In revealing Himself to the world, God proposed to Himself, in the first place, the manifestation of His own glory, that of His Son, and the Holy Virgin. This glory consisting principally in the manifestation of the divine perfections, he, certainly, would not correspond with the designs of God, who, treating these mysteries, should neglect to develop and lay before his hearers those perfections which are found in such ineffable brightness in them by the soul who devoutly meditates them. He would be wanting to his duty, who did not seize such a favourable opportunity of inspiring his hearers with a high idea, and a profound esteem and veneration, for these perfections, whilst he would deprive them of most salutary, if not absolutely essential, instruction. Thus, for example, treating the mystery of the Crucifixion, we may dilate upon the justice of God, which requires such an awful expiation for sin; upon His mercy, which so wonderfully reconciles the demands of justice with the promptings of compassion;

upon the grandeur of the sacrifice in which a God is immolated to satisfy the outraged attributes of a God. And so of the other mysteries; since, whichever one we may treat, we can always show how worthy it is of God, of His wisdom, His goodness, His bounty, and His power.

III. Besides explaining the exterior and interior relations of the mystery, as well as the perfections of God which are manifested in it, we must also show the advantages which flow to man from a devout commemoration of it. After the manifestation of His own glory, or that of His Divine Son, the great end of God, in working these mysteries, was the benefit of man. Hence, it is clearly the duty of the preacher, when explaining any mystery, to show how God has, in each particular case, attained His end; and he will show this by dwelling upon the graces which are secured to man, and the evils which are removed far from him, through the medium of the mystery which is celebrated. Thus, for example, we may show how the Incarnation has resuscitated fallen man; how it has saved the human race, which had been destroyed by sin; how it has raised human nature even to a participation with that of the divinity; how it has brought down upon earth a priceless benefactor, an unerring teacher, and an incomparable model. This mode of presenting the mysteries is one which is equally calculated to cause our hearers to love and to respect religion, and to appeal most powerfully to the better feelings of those who are thus taught to see in themselves the object and the end of all the created works of God.

Such are the various points of view under which the mysteries are to be presented to our hearers, in order that they may obtain a clear and thorough knowledge of these saving truths. In the 3rd Part of his *Summa*, St. Thomas developes these ideas with wonderful beauty and precision. Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and, in fact, all the great orators of later times, have followed the same plan, employing the mysteries as means of rendering more manifest the infinite goodness of God, and the infinite advantages which have thence accrued to man.

St. Francis of Sales recommends another method of instructing our hearers in the mysteries, which is to consider these three points: viz., Who? Why? How? For example: Who is born? The Son of God. Why? In order to redeem man. How? Poor, naked, cold, in a stable, a helpless infant.

This method, which is very good in itself, and possesses the great merit of simplicity, scarcely admits, however, of the same varied amplification, and the same special developments, as the one which we have sketched out at greater length in the preceding pages. *Quisquis in suo sensu abundet.*

SECTION III.

How to Cause our Hearers to render due Honor to any Mystery.

Whilst the Christian orator labours to instruct his hearers in the nature and relations of the mystery which may be the subject of his discourse, he should

strive no less earnestly, to touch their hearts, and to inspire them with those pious affections and sentiments which should necessarily arise from the consideration of this truth. The preacher who, in treating these sacred and most interesting subjects, should fail to speak to the hearts of his hearers, would fall far short of the end which he ought to propose to himself: since the considerations which have been developed in the preceding section, are, after all, but the means to be employed in order to move the heart, to inflame it with the fire of divine charity, and to cause it to become penetrated with sentiments of Christian piety.

These sentiments will, of course, vary according to the mystery which we treat; but as a general rule, they will be reducible to one or other of the following: *Gratitude* for the graces which are bestowed upon us through this mystery: *Love* for the goodness which is manifested in it: *Admiration* and *Praise* for the Greatness, the Power, and the Wisdom, which it displays: *Respect* and *Veneration*, on account of the excellency of the mystery in itself: *Resolution* and a *Firm Determination* to lead henceforward a more perfect life: *Joy* or *Compassion*.

In the development of these various affections and sentiments, the zealous preacher will find ample scope for the manifestation of that unction which ever imparts its greatest charm to a discourse, and renders it most powerful for good over the hearts of his hearers.

SECTION IV.

How to Cause our Hearers to Participate in the Graces of a Mystery

The mysteries of the Life and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ were wrought that they might be the abundant sources of grace, to be bestowed upon man, through the ministry of His Church. These graces may well be supposed to be bestowed in a special manner, and in their greatest abundance, on the days when these saving mysteries are commemorated; and hence, it follows, that the pastor of souls will omit no pains, so to instruct his people upon these great truths, that they may participate in the benedictions which flow from them.

In order to secure this great, and, indeed, we may say sole, object of his preaching on these sacred subjects, he will, in the first place, carefully point out to his people the lessons of virtue which are contained in, and are deducible from, the mystery of which he treats, and he will exhort his hearers to reduce these lessons to practice. He will exhort them, with equal fervour, to implore the grace of Jesus Christ, and the assistance of His Blessed Mother; since the grace to do well is to be sought and obtained in the same mystery which lays before us the lessons of virtue which we aspire to practise.

He will, in the second place, carefully direct their attention to the means by which our Lord operated this mystery. For example: what means did our Lord

take to arrive at the glory of His Resurrection? He was crucified, He died, and was buried! And, then, the preacher will draw for his people the obvious conclusion: viz., that if we desire to rise with Christ we must crucify our passions, die to our sins, and bury our self-love in the grave.

Thirdly, he will remind them of this great truth, viz., that, besides the general graces attached to the mysteries, each mystery has its own special grace. He should earnestly impress this truth upon their attention, and should fervently exhort them to labour to merit this special grace by their prayers, their virtues, and the practice of the analogous virtues. He should make them clearly understand that the reception of this special grace is the principal fruit which they should seek from the celebration of the mystery whence it flows. Thus, the special grace of Christmas is the grace of simplicity, of innocence, of that new life which is at once made up of innocence, of candour, and of Christian simplicity. The special grace of the Epiphany is the grace of prompt and ready correspondence with the will of God. The grace of the Passion is the grace of mortification and self-abnegation. And, so of the rest, into which it is not necessary here to enter, as we have sufficiently intimated the great leading points upon which the preacher will dwell, in order to secure the threefold end of his preaching on the mysteries, viz.: To make them known: To make them honored: To cause his people to participate in the general and special graces which are attached to them.

SECTION V.

Various Methods of Presenting the Mysteries—Dogmatic, Moral, and Mixed Form—Bourdaloue.

Having glanced in the preceding sections at the leading ideas, which will enter more or less fully into every discourse on the mysteries, it remains briefly to consider the various forms under which these subjects may be presented.

A discourse on the mysteries may take either the dogmatic, moral, or mixed form, according to the discretion of the preacher, and the special circumstances of his audience.

In a dogmatic discourse on any mystery the preacher proposes to himself principally, and before all, to give a direct exposition of the truth which he treats, and of that special aspect under which it is presentable as a matter of faith and of dogmatic teaching. He may not absolutely confine himself to this point of view, but any moral reflections which he may deduce will be brought in merely as accessories, and as consequences of the great dogmatic truth which he treats. Whilst a dogmatic discourse on any mystery will certainly be a dogmatic sermon in the loftiest meaning of the term; we may easily conclude, from this very fact, that it is a discourse which will but seldom be applicable or useful to our ordinary congregations. The circumstances in which we can employ this rigorously dogmatical form will be exceptional; and even in these circumstances, we must carefully attend to the

general principles thrown out when considering the method of preaching on the great Christian truths; but, supposing these circumstances to exist, it cannot be doubted that a sermon on the mysteries, dogmatically treated, presents one of the grandest opportunities to the sacred orator for the display of all that is greatest, most polished, and sublime in his art.

There are some who fly to another extreme, and who, when they have to preach on any mystery, devote themselves entirely to pious reflections, and to the inculcation of the virtue which is the special fruit of the mystery in question. This is what is understood by the moral form. Pere Bretonneau, speaking of this method, says, that it cannot be absolutely reprehended, since there is nothing in it contrary to the rules of eloquence. But, he says, to concentrate all one's attention upon these moral reflections, and to propose them as the main point of the mystery, and as the special fruit to be derived from it, is absolutely to lose sight of the mystery itself; and thus to lose sight of it, is to fail in our duty. The ministry of the Word has for one of its main objects to instruct our hearers in their religion. But they will never acquire more than a very imperfect knowledge of their religion, unless we explain to them its primary principles, and its fundamental truths; in other words, the mysteries. Hence, it follows, that the purely moral form should only be employed when addressing an audience who we are quite certain stand in no need of dogmatic instruction or of elementary teaching.

The most perfect form of presenting the mysteries

is that which is called the mixed, and it is one which Bourdaloue employed with extraordinary grace, and which he wrought up to the highest point of perfection. This method consists in giving, in the first place, all necessary instruction and dogmatic teaching on the mystery in question, and in uniting to this teaching those moral conclusions which seem to flow naturally from it. These two points should be so intimately connected, and so harmoniously united, that the dogmatic teaching may serve as a foundation on which to rest the moral conclusions, and these conclusions may flow as the natural consequences of the mystery. The preacher who carefully observes these conditions will be quite certain to secure the essential points to be attended to in treating these matters. His hearers will be taught to understand the end and the relations of the mysteries; the designs which God proposed to Himself in their manifestation; the adorable perfections of the Divine Persons which are discernible in them; the advantages which flow from them; the dispositions with which they are to be celebrated; and, in fine, the general and special graces which are attached to them.

There are two principal ways of presenting the mysteries under the mixed form:—

The first method is to treat the doctrine of the mystery in the first point, which will thus be dogmatical, and the fruit to be derived from it in the second point, which will be moral: Ex. g.

First Point Excellence and grandeur of the mystery.

Second Point. The manner of honoring it, and of participating in its graces.

Or, in another form:—

First Point. What God has done for us in this mystery.

Second Point. What we ought to do for God.

The second method is to unite the doctrine and the fruits of the mystery in the same point; and to include them in the same announcement: Ex. g.

First Point. In His crib, Jesus is a benefactor whom we are bound to love.

Second Point. A Doctor to whom we are bound to listen.

Third Point. A Model whom we are bound to imitate.

It will be seen at a glance that either of these methods, but more especially the second one, admits of infinite amplification and development. The great dogmatic truths, and the moral conclusions which are essentially connected with them, may be thus proposed with the most perfect clearness. Following this method, Bourdaloue dilates upon the mysteries with the greatest beauty and precision of doctrinal teaching, and thence deduces the most important lessons for the reformation of men's lives and manners. Making all due allowance for differences of style, of circumstances, and of position, the student can take no more finished model to guide him in his preparation to preach on the mysteries of the faith, than this great ornament of the French pulpit.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PANEGYRICS OF THE SAINTS AND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

SECTION I.

Antiquity and Special Utility of this Class of Subjects.

FOREMOST amongst those subjects which will naturally claim the attention of the Priest from time to time, are the Panegyrics of the Saints. A panegyric is a discourse consecrated to the praise of a saint, with a view, of course, of proposing him as a model to be followed, and as a patron to be honored and invoked. "*Ut et illis debitus honor dicetur, et nobis virtutis exempla monstrentur.*"[1] The practice of preaching the Panegyrics of the Saints, has come down to us from the earliest days of the Church, which never allowed her heroic children to depart this life without summoning the survivors around their tombs, that, by recounting the noble examples of those who were gone, she might encourage the faithful to imitate the lessons of piety placed before them.

The pastor of souls can never sufficiently persuade himself of the advantages which lie open to him in the

[1] St. Chrys. 1, *Ser de Mart.*

skilful treatment of this class of subjects. There is no subject more worthy of his highest aspirings, as there is none which can be more interesting or more useful to his people. Examples of piety and virtue make a much more lively impression upon us than any mere reflections can ever do. They excite more interest, they strike deeper root in the heart, and obtain a stronger hold upon the soul. Men upon whom the most earnest exhortations have fallen coldly and without fruit, have been converted to God by the examples of the saints. "*Quod isti et istæ, cur non ego*," said St. Augustine. In the lives of the saints we have the Gospel reduced to practice. We have a clear and well-defined rule of life laid before us for our imitation, with a certain knowledge that such imitation is not only practicable, but that it will infallibly lead us to eternal happiness.

Hence it is that the Holy Fathers, anxiously corresponding with the views of the Church in instituting the festivals of the saints, were ever most assiduous in celebrating these festivals, and in proposing the saints thus honored to the veneration and the imitation of their people. "*Solemnitates martyrum exhortationes martyriorum sunt*," cries St. Augustine;[1] whilst St. Basil lays down, in a few beautiful words, the true end and aim to which we are to aspire in preaching these panegyrics: "*Hæc est martyrum vera laus alios ad eorum virtutem æmulandam invitare.*"[2] Besides St. Augustine and St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St.

[1] *Ser.* 47, *de Sanctis.* [2] *Hom.* 20, *in Quadraginta Martyres.*

Chrysostom, and other holy doctors, have left us many beautiful panegyrics of the saints of God; and the example of these great men is the one which the zealous pastor of souls will surely propose to himself to follow.

Hence, as often as the Church proposes any of her saints as objects worthy of the special veneration of the faithful, the pastor will gladly seize the opportunity of making the panegyric of this saint the subject of his discourse. In addition to the more solemn occasions which occur from time to time, he will, when he foresees that his people may not be able to assemble for solemn worship on the day of the festival, after previously looking through the calendar of the approaching week, take, for the subject of his ordinary Sunday's sermon, the panegyric of any saint whose feast occurs during the week, and whom he may deem it specially useful or becoming to bring before the notice of his flock. By this prudent foresight he will thus secure the respectful veneration which is due to the memory of God's favoured servants, the saints: he will cause the power of their example to bring forth its due fruit: and he will, at the same time, produce a discourse which will be equally pleasing and useful to his people.

In preparing to preach a panegyric, the young pastor will carefully distinguish between the *panegyric* of a saint and his *history*—two matters which, though distinct, are often confounded. The history of a saint merely treats of the actions and the circumstances of his life, while the panegyric only aims at treating of

those matters in his life which may, directly or indirectly, be made the subject of edification.

If we extol our saint, it is that we may cause our people to honor him, and to invoke his intercession, and that we may engage them to the practice of virtue, by bringing before them models which may instruct and encourage them. We insist upon the means which sanctified him, in order to prove to our people how worthy he is of their worship; to make them understand in what true sanctity consists; to show them that they can, and that they ought, acquire it; and to encourage them, by all that is strongest in its influence over the heart of man, viz., example and reward—to labour earnestly in the work of their sanctification. Everything in a panegyric which does not tend to this twofold end is altogether out of place, and should be strictly eliminated; and, from this view of it, we can see, at a glance, the essential difference between the history and the panegyric of a saint,

After these brief reflections on the general idea of a panegyric, we now have, in studying this important branch of Sacred Eloquence, to consider the following points:—

I. The sources whence we are to derive the materials for the panegyric.

II. The different methods according to which the subject may be treated.

III. A comparison between the two principal modes of preaching a panegyric.

IV. The rules which are common to both modes.

SECTION II.

The Sources whence to draw the Materials for the Panegyric of a Saint.

The sources whence to draw the materials which will aid us in composing the panegyrics of the saints may, as a general rule, be reduced to four, viz.: 1. The position which they occupied. 2. The great actions which they performed. 3. The intentions with which they performed these actions. 4. Comparisons between them and other men.

I. *The circumstances of position* can readily be shown to have a great influence on virtue. A man's position may be such as to render the practice of virtue very difficult, and to demand great courage in order to be faithful to duty; or, a man may generously despise the accident of wealth, of talents, of temporal advantages, which he may possess, and count all these things as nothing in comparison with his sanctification.

The sanctity of St. Martin shines out all the more brightly from the fact that it was nurtured and perfected in the midst of an idolatrous and pagan family. The courage of St. Agnes is all the more admirable because it was exhibited by a young and tender virgin. We reverence all the more profoundly those lessons of humility in the midst of grandeur, of mortification in the midst of delicacies, and of recollection amidst affairs of state, which are taught us by St. Louis, because they are taught us by a rich and powerful king: and so

of all the other saints of God. But, whilst we dwell upon, and develop these circumstances of position, we must be careful to develop those alone which can be shown to have a positive bearing and influence upon sanctity; and if it happen that the saint whose panegyric we are preaching occupied a high position in the world, we must be careful not to appear to estimate this circumstance in a mere worldly point of view.

II. In considering the *actions of the saints*, with a view to the obtaining of matter for a panegyric, several things are to be borne in mind.

(*a*) We must fix upon some few of the most striking actions, sacrificing the less important details, or, at least, passing them over lightly and in a body.

(*b*) In selecting facts it is much more necessary to fix upon those which are imitable than upon those which are admirable; upon those which tend to the edification of the people, rather than the glorification of the saint; upon his virtuous actions rather than his miracles. There is a very common mistake with people of the world, and it is this: viz., to attach sanctity to extraordinary things, and only to estimate in a saint, or, at all events, to estimate in the highest degree, that which has something miraculous about it. Now, this is a very false idea, and the preacher is bound to do his best to dissipate it, and to show that sanctity has its true and most reliable development in hidden virtues, and in the performance of common and ordinary actions; in that uniform and constant piety which, without any showing off or display, follows with firm step the path of duty; which is as exact in little as in great things, and

which, by its fidelity to those, prepares itself for the performance of these; which animates the one equally with the other, by a lively faith and an ardent charity.

(*c*) After having selected our facts, we must give due time to the study of the circumstances which preceded, accompanied, and followed them, as the *time*, *place*, *manner*, &c., &c. *Quis? Quid? Ubi?* For example, the circumstances which attended the temptation of the patriarch Joseph are replete with the most instructive reflections, and will supply the studious preacher with an infinity of practical and most interesting suggestions.

III. The *intention* and *interior dispositions* which animate a man's actions, and, thus animating them, make them works of virtue and merit, are what render them truly pleasing in the eyes of God. External actions are only valuable in so far as they are the indications and the effects of interior virtue; and the great merit of the saints does not consist in any merely external action, no matter how miraculous it may be, but in those interior virtues of which these actions are the outward manifestations. Therefore, the preacher should endeavour to penetrate the interior dispositions of the saints; he should render himself familiar with the intentions which animated their minds and their actions, and filled them with such an ardent desire of pleasing God above all things; and, in the panegyric, he should use his utmost endeavours to lay open to his flock the hidden and secret beauties of those holy souls whose merits he aspires to proclaim.

In many instances, the leading ideas and the govern-

ing principles of the lives of the saints found their expression in certain maxims and forms of speech, and these can be turned to great account by a skilful panegyrist. There is a peculiar charm, and, so to speak, a certain odour of piety, about the words of a saint. They are the natural expressions and manifestation of the beauty of his soul. They carry with them a peculiar light and unction, and they are very readily impressed upon the minds of one's hearers; and, therefore, the preacher should assiduously strive to derive the fullest profit from these maxims in his discourse. The favourite and well-known maxim of St. Aloysius: "All that passes with time should be esteemed as nothing," is an example in point.

IV. *Comparisons* and *parallels*, when skilfully employed, furnish the panegyrist with abundant materials. These comparisons may be made in three ways.

(*a*) *By Opposition.* We may, for example, compare the sentiments and the actions of the saint, whose panegyric we are preaching, with the sentiments, the words, and the actions of men of the world; and, from the contrast which is the natural result of this comparison, we may take occasion to extol the wisdom and the courage of the saints, their exalted view of things, and their generous sentiments.

(*b*) *By Similarity.* We may develop some great trait of virtue in another saint, in order to show that the saint of whom we are speaking possessed the same virtue, in the same degree, or, at least, approached to it. Thus, St. Gregory in his panegyric of St. Athana-

sius, says of him, that he was equal in virtue to some and that he fell but little short of others. *Alios exæquavit, ab aliis parum abfuit.*

(*c*) *By Dissimilarity.* We may not only place the actions of our saint upon a level with the actions of other saints, but we may even raise them above those of others. Thus, St. Gregory compares the mother of the Machabees, who offered her seven sons, with Abraham who only offered one. This last mode of argument can, of course, be employed with very great power; but, it is scarcely necessary to add, that it must be used with great caution. The common axiom that comparisons are odious, must be carefully kept in view; and, hence, whilst we do our utmost to extol our saint in all due measure, we must equally guard against becoming extravagant and forgetful of good taste. We must not represent him as the greatest saint in Heaven, for this would not be true. Whilst we exalt our own saint, we must not detract from the glory of the saint with whom we compare him, but rather labour to elevate him as much as possible, because the more we exalt him, the more we exalt our own saint. And, above all, we must never seek to extol the sanctity of any saint over that of our Lord, of His Blessed Mother, or even of His Apostles. There is an infinite distance between the sanctity of our Lord and that of His saints: an indefinite distance between that of the Blessed Virgin and of any other saint: and a clearly defined and appreciable distance between the sanctity of the Apostles and that of other saints: since, as St. Thomas teaches, they received grace more abundantly

than the rest of men. *Acceperunt cæteris abundantius.* By the diligent working of these sources the studious preacher cannot fail to find an ample supply of materials ready to his hand when he approaches the actual composition of his panegyric.

SECTION III.

Different Methods of presenting the Panegyric—the Moral and Historical Forms.

Before entering upon the consideration of the form under which the panegyric may be presented, it may be useful briefly to call the student's attention to the difference between the *foundation* and the *form* of a panegyric.

The *foundation* of the panegyric is always the same, viz. the life of the saint, his virtues, miracles, or other heroic acts.

Whatever form we may give to the panegyric, our first business must ever be to show in the saint those virtues which our hearers can most readily practise in their own position; and if we bring before them heroic actions which they can scarcely perform in their state of life, we must explain to them at the same time how they may make some approach at least to that which they cannot perfectly imitate. We must dwell again and again upon the great truth, that the saints ever discharged with perfect fidelity the duties of their peculiar state of life, and that it was precisely this fidelity to daily duties which made them saints. If we

speak of the miracles, or other extraordinary gifts of the saints, it must be in order to draw thence arguments with which to confirm the faith of our hearers, to manifest to them the greatness of the Almighty, and the glory of His saints; to engage them to rely upon the protection of these special friends of God; and, above all, to set before them, briefly but strongly, the motives which may encourage them to practise those particular virtues which we desire to hold up to their imitation.

The *form* of the panegyric, or, in other words, the method of arranging it, may be twofold: the moral, or the historical.

The moral form, which is that employed by Bossuet and Bourdaloue, consists in dividing the panegyric either into the two or three principal virtues which were especially remarkable in the saint; or in the consideration of the one great virtue which was his characteristic, and the speciality, so to speak, of his sanctity. P. Bretonneau, the learned editor of the discourses of Bourdaloue, thus describes the moral form as exemplified in the panegyrics of that celebrated orator: "In place of embracing all the virtues and the whole life of the saint, P. Bourdaloue devotes himself to the development of that particular virtue which was his special characteristic; for, as there are certain predominant vices which are the foundation of all the sinner's excesses, so there are in the saints, certain sovereign virtues, so to speak, from the consideration of which we may readily come to a true idea of their sanctity, and of the guiding principles of their

lives . . . . . P. Bourdaloue confines himself to the consideration of some great moral truth, and thence deduces the conclusion to be applied to the whole discourse, or to each particular part of it. Thus, insisting upon this one great moral truth, and its legitimate consequences, he gives himself the fullest scope for instructing his hearers by solid reasoning, and for moving their hearts by the most pathetic appeals to their passions." The moral form is here clearly described in a few simple words.

If we select the moral form of our panegyric, and wish to dwell upon the *two* or *three* great leading virtues of the saint, we may easily do so. Let us take the panegyric of St. Louis as an example. Humility, mortification, and detachment were his characteristic virtues, and his panegyric may be thus composed:

First Point. The humility of this great King in the midst of honors teaches us how to be humble.

Second Point. His mortification in the midst of the delicacies of a court, teaches us how to restrain our senses.

Third Point. His detachment in the midst of abundance, teaches us how to keep our affections disengaged from the things of the world.

Briefly developing what is to be said upon each of these virtues, and the circumstances in which it was practised by this holy King, we shall easily find abundant matter for our discourse, more especially if we enter into a consideration of the nature, characteristics, and marks of these virtues.

If, on the other hand, we desire to dwell on some *one*

great characteristic virtue, as the spirit of sweetness in St. Francis of Sales, we may arrange our discourse more easily still. Thus, we may reduce the whole life of the saint to the realization of this idea. Ex. g.:

First Point. St. Francis of Sales, by the force of his sweetness, triumphed over heresy.

Second Point. By the unction of his sweetness he re-established piety and fervour in the Church of Geneva.

Or, we may connect the life of the saint with certain actions or indications proper to explain the nature of the particular virtue on which we desire to dwell. Thus, in preaching the panegyric of St. Andrew, whose great characteristic was love of the cross, we may indicate, with St. Bernard, the three degrees of this love: To suffer *patiently*, *willingly*, and *cheerfully*: and then show how perfectly St. Andrew teaches us to carry the cross with this threefold disposition.

Thus, selecting one great characteristic virtue as the subject of our discourse, we can easily bring into our panegyric everything which has an intimate connection with this virtue and its special developments; as, for example, its nature, its motives, and its means; and then we can show how perfectly the saint of whom we speak practised this virtue; the motives which influenced him in this mode of action; and the means by which he acquired it in its highest degree.

By the aid of these principles, too, we can easily preach the panegyric of any saint, the precise details of whose life may be but imperfectly known. Thus, if we have to preach the panegyric, let us say, of one of

the martyrs of the Catacombs, we may reasonably take as his characteristic virtue the love of God. We may lay down as principles that the love which is true manifests that truth by its works; that the love which is generous, prefers God before all things; and that the love which is ardent rejoices to have made great sacrifices for God. Then we may proceed to show how the saint of whom we speak possessed this triple love, as he proved by laying down his life for God, and that all Christians ought equally to possess it, and the means by which they may attain it.

The historical form differs from the moral in this, that while in the moral form the preacher proposes to confine himself to the consideration of the one great characteristic virtue of the saint, or at most, to the consideration of the two or three great virtues which specially distinguished him; according to the historical method, he proposes to run through the whole life of the saint, and to lay that life in its entirety, with a greater or less degree of development, of course, but still, in its entirety as a life, before his hearers. For greater order and facility of treatment, that life may be divided into different epochs or states: one epoch may be dwelt upon more than another, as one chain of actions may be more artistically finished and more prominently developed than another; but, *mutatis mutandis*, the leading idea is the same, viz. to run through the whole life of the saint.

Fenelon, who is a great admirer of this method of preaching a panegyric, thus describes it: "The most admirable way of extolling any saint," says he, "is to

extol those actions of his which are worthy of such praise. After listening to a preacher for an hour we often retire without having really learned anything of the saint of whom he pretends to speak. No! we must paint the saint as he was, we must describe him as he was, in all the stages of his life, and in all the great leading incidents through which he passed. I do not require a mere mechanical narration of his whole life. On the contrary, I should be content with a resumé of its principal circumstances; but this resumé must be concise, nervous, and full of life. I desire that each word should at once give me a high idea of the saint, and be full of instruction for the people. To this history of my saint I would add such moral reflections as I deem most becoming. Do you not think that such a discourse would possess a noble and beautiful simplicity? Do you not think that the lives of the saints would be better known, and the people more edified? Do you not think that such a discourse would be more eloquent than the laboured and bombastic panegyrics which we ordinarily hear?" Such is the language in which Fenelon clearly describes the historical panegyric; and his ideas are fully endorsed by Card. Maury, who is also a great admirer of this method.

According, therefore, to this method, we propose to run through the whole life of our saint; but, as we have just said, we may, for greater clearness, portion it out in various ways.

We may, in the first place, divide the life of any saint into the *principal epochs* of which it was made

up. Thus, we may consider him in his infancy, in his life, and in his death. The Abbé Clement thus divides the life of St. Nicholas:—

First Point. This saint was a miracle of piety in his infancy.

Second Point. A miracle of charity in his life.

Third Point. A miracle of faith in his death.

Or, we may divide these epochs after another manner, more especially in the case of such saints as Augustine, Mary Magdalen, &c. &c. Thus:—

First Point. The promptitude of his conversion; he obeyed the call of grace.

Second Point. The solidity of his conversion; he never relapsed.

Third Point. The perfection of his conversion; it elevated him to a high degree of sanctity.

Thirdly. We may divide the history of a saint according to the more remarkable states in which he might be placed. Thus, we may consider him as a man of the world, as a religious, and as a bishop.

These are some of the methods according to which the historical panegyric may be divided, and we can see at a glance that, in filling in the details which any of these methods necessarily supposes, we should run through the entire life of the saint—at least in all its great leading circumstances and events. The discourse of St. Gregory Nazianzen on the Machabees; the sermons of St. Augustine on SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, and on St. Vincent the Martyr; and the Homily of St. John Chrysostom in honor of SS. Juventus and Maximus, are striking examples of the historical panegyric.

Such are the leading ideas which occur to us concerning the moral and historical form of preaching the panegyric, and the salient points of the distinction between them. We now proceed to consider the comparative excellence and utility of the two methods.

SECTION IV.

Comparison between the two Forms of Presenting a Panegyric.

Provided the end be attained, it is a matter of very little importance which form we adopt in the composition of our panegyric. Each form has its own peculiar advantages and excellency; and these we are now briefly to consider.

Fenelon[1] maintains, and with justice, that the historical form is the more simple and natural. It is certainly the one which was most commonly, if not the only one, employed in the early ages of the Church. This form of panegyric is used with the greatest felicity and advantage when the life of the saint is well known, and rich in interesting facts, but facts which may not be very familiar to our audience. Maury,[2] an enthusiastic admirer of this method, declares that the only saint whose panegyric can be properly preached, is a saint who is well known—an opinion with which we can scarcely agree, at least in its full extent. Adopted in his unlimited signification, it would virtually do

[1] *3e Dial. sur l'éloquence.* [2] Maury, p. 66.

away with the necessity, and with many of the peculiar advantages, of the moral form—a form which, nevertheless, has been most powerfully employed by some of the greatest orators of modern times.

The perfection of the historical form consists in absorbing, as it were, the attention of our hearers, by presenting them with a succession of rapid, striking, but substantial resumés, unbroken and uninterrupted by any lengthy moral conclusions or deductions. In other words, the whole life of the saint should be brought before the mind's eye of our hearers in a succession of brilliant, rapid pictures—pictures rendered so real and so bright by the power of word-painting which every true orator possesses, as to bring them home at once to an audience. A happy text of Scripture is one of the most useful foundations which the orator can employ on which to build up and unfold the glories of his saint, by such a series of pictures, varied and ever-increasing in interest, as will give an oratorical finish and grace to even the most simple historical narrative. Thus, ex. g.: If we had to preach the panegyric of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, we might take, as the text of our discourse, the inspired words: *Ego elegi vos, et posui vos, ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneat*;[1] and we might so apply the various portions of the text to the various portions of the life, labours, and glorious fruits of our saint, as to present our hearers with such a succession of vivid pictures as we have been endeavouring

[1] Joan. xv. 16.

to describe; whilst, at the same time, these pictures would furnish at once the most complete view of the life and labours of the saint, and the most perfect development of the text.

These pictures, of course, should be presented in such a manner as to cause the audience to lose sight of the painter, and to think only of the saint whose portrait is thus vividly painted; that, thus thinking of him, they may never cease to honor and admire him, and resolve to imitate the glorious example of virtue which is here set before them; and the best panegyrist therefore, from this point of view, is he who is best able thus to concentrate the whole attention of his audience upon his subject rather than upon himself; he who, whilst he will not neglect to enforce those moral reflections without which his panegyric would be merely an empty piece of oratory, will at the same time render these reflections subordinate to, and dependent upon, his history of the life and actions of the saint. In one word, in the historical panegyric, the life and actions of the saint hold the leading and most prominent position, and the moral reflections are altogether subordinate to this idea; whilst, in the moral form, the practical conclusions, and the moral reflections, may, and generally will, occupy the first place.

According to Maury,[1] the most fatal error in pursuing this method would be to confound the oratorical distribution of the panegyric with the chronological order of the events to be narrated. We must never lose

[1] Maury, p. 83.

sight, he says, of the progressive order, or of the oratorical distribution of the events to be narrated; that so, the panegyric being arranged not only in accordance with the historical sequence of events, but also with the essential affinities of the actions to be praised, may be thus sustained and elevated to the highest degree of eloquence by means of the happy and felicitous development of the subject. He explains his meaning by adducing the instance of a certain French orator who, after concluding the first point of his discourse with the death of his hero, returned in the second to the consideration of some of the actions of his life.

It is evident that the remarks which we have made relative to the historical form only have place where there is question of the solemn panegyric. There are other panegyrics more simple, more popular, and perhaps more useful. It may be, that, in these popular panegyrics, all the rules of eloquence will not be so strictly observed, but that which is essential, viz., the end to be secured, will, perhaps, be even more efficaciously attained. The popular historical panegyric, which may be employed with great profit on more simple occasions, or, when the preacher cannot find leisure to devote to the preparation of a highly finished discourse, will comprise three leading ideas:

First. A simple, but lively and interesting narration of the leading traits of the life of the saint.

Second. The deduction of some moral reflections.

Third. The inculcation of some becoming practical resolutions.

So much for the historical form.

The Moral Form, whilst less in accordance with the practice of antiquity, has nevertheless its own peculiar excellency, and is, perhaps, *omnibus pensatis*, the best adapted for general usefulness, as it is the one most frequently employed by modern orators. Amongst the real advantages of the moral form is the fact that in it unity of plan is more easily observed. Since, in order to obtain this unity, the preacher needs only reduce the whole idea and bearing of his discourse to the one great moral proposition which he proposes to himself to develop: and this is perfect unity.

Moreover, the moral form possesses peculiar advantages in the following circumstances: When we have to preach the panegyric of a saint of whom little or nothing is known; and this is evident from what has been already said in explaining the nature of this method: When the details of his life are so well known that we can scarcely say anything new on the matter: When we have to preach the panegyric of the same saint to the same audience, year after year. In these circumstances the advantages of this form are obvious.

There is something very grand and sublime when a preacher, in the natural development of his discourse, unfolds, as it were, to the view of his audience the facts and incidents in the life of the saint which are thus necessarily displayed, whilst at the same time, he draws from these very facts an array of triumphant arguments and proofs in favour of the moral virtue which forms the foundation of his discourse.

The direct inculcation of morality, which has place in the moral panegyric, will always have a more powerful

influence in the repression of vice, than that indirect inculcation which is in accordance with the strict idea of the historical form. At least such is the opinion of the supporters of this method, and it is one which, from the character of those who maintain it, is worthy of great deference.

These are some of the principal motives which seem to have influenced many of our greatest modern orators in preferring the moral to the historical form of presenting the panegyric. The zealous pastor of souls will, doubtless, discover how to employ them both, as occasion may require, with pleasure to himself and profit to his people, whilst he will be no less certain to render the one method and the other equally subservient to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

SECTION V.

Rules Common to Every Kind of Panegyric.

Whatever method we may follow in the composition of our panegyric, there are certain rules which are equally applicable, and upon the due observance of which, its success equally depends.

I. Cardinal Maury, speaking of this kind of discourse, says that the most ordinary defect under which it labours arises from its being made up of a collection of mere common-places, which are equally ill-adapted to express the praises of an individual or to paint his life and character. He says that the majority of panegyrics are only distinguished from each other by

the title, and that they are equally applicable to every saint of the particular order of which the preacher undertakes to treat.[1]

These remarks, which are true, have their foundation in the circumstance that the majority of panegyrists are not sufficiently careful in the selection of their facts. Hence, the first rule to be observed:

The *facts* which furnish the foundation of the panegyric should be *certain*, *characteristic*, *interesting*, and capable of an *easy adaptation* to the special wants of our hearers.

The dignity of the Pulpit requires that we advance no assertion, under the sanction of its authority, which does not rest on solid foundations. These foundations are Holy Writ, the Fathers, the Martyrology, and the Lives of the Saints, written by men whose learning, piety, and critical research entitle them to our confidence. Assertions which cannot be sustained, empty declamation, and bombastic eulogiums, can find no place in the true panegyric.

The facts which we employ should be characteristic; that is to say, there should be something in them which may mark out our saint from other men, and be, so to speak, the expressions and exponents of his speciality. Very frequently this characteristic will be found in some single word, or in some single act. If we are thoroughly conversant with the life of our saint, we shall have no difficulty in seizing these characteristics. Without such familiarity, we shall look for them in

[1] Essai sur l'eloquence.

vain, and our panegyric will be general, vapid, and pointless in proportion. An artist might just as well pretend to paint a landscape, the most striking features of which he has never seen.

It is no less evident that our facts should be interesting. There are certain actions, even in the lives of the saints, which may possess no great or special interest for our hearers, and these are to be passed over lightly, if we deem it right to refer to them at all. But there are other incidents and facts in their lives which are full of interest—such as their miracles and extraordinary gifts—which captivate the attention of our hearers, confirm them in their faith, and show forth at once the power of God, and the influence possessed by His holy saints. And it is upon these facts that we are specially to dwell, if we desire to render our panegyric interesting.

In fine, the facts which we employ should be capable of an easy adaptation to the special wants of our audience, since one of the main objects of our preaching is to render them better men. The means most potent for this end will be found in all those actions, and all those virtues of the saint which the majority of our hearers can most easily imitate. For the further development of this matter, we refer our readers to "Sacred Eloquence."[1]

II. In each kind of panegyric, the rules regarding unity of plan must be strictly observed. There must be unity of end and of means, and all the parts of the

[1] "Sacred Eloquence." 3rd edit., p. 246, *et seq.*

panegyric must form a perfect whole. The general end of the speaker is to paint the saint in such a pleasing manner that our hearers may judge him worthy of being honored, and take him as the model of their lives. The immediate end of the panegyric is, of course, the exaltation of the saint; but this is subordinate to the final end, which is the practice of virtue, and the sanctification of our hearers.

The essential means are an imitation of the actions and virtues of the saints. These the orator will develop by a consideration of the circumstances which preceded, accompanied, and followed them, according to the method already laid down. There will be unity of means in his panegyric, when the preacher takes care so to connect and link all the parts of his discourse, and all the facts which compose the body of it, as to advance continually upon the same line of progressive conception.

III. The general principles regarding the construction of a discourse are to be observed as much as possible—*mutatis mutandis*—in the preparation of the panegyric. The literal application of the text will not always, perhaps only seldom, be possible; but texts of Holy Scripture may frequently be employed with great fruit, even when they are not literally applicable. In the exordium the preacher follows all the ordinary rules of a discourse. He may make an excellent beginning by a happy application of his text, or by presenting the life of the saint in miniature, as it were; or by bringing out, in strong relief, the great moral virtue which it is his special object to develop.

IV. All the ornaments and graces of rhetoric may be employed in the solemn panegyric. Elegance and beauty of style, pomp of diction, and elevation of thought: in one word, everything that can help to manifest our enthusiasm for the saint whose panegyric we preach, and to bring him before our hearers in the most brilliant colours, may be here employed in the highest degree. Whilst the preacher labours to elevate his panegyric to the summit of rhetorical perfection, he will take care, as an eminent authority[1] wisely cautions him, not to soar above the comprehension of his hearers, and not to fall into the error of rendering every part of his discourse equally ornamented and equally finished. Let him paint the grand actions of his saint in the most brilliant and attractive colours. Let him depict the minor circumstances with more modest touches and in more unobtrusive shades. Let his instructions, and the moral reflections which he deduces from his subject, find their greatest charm in the simplicity of his style, and the unaffected earnestness of his manner. In fine, let him be thoroughly in earnest; let him fill himself with his subject; before seeking to inspire others, let him animate himself with a genuine enthusiasm for the saint whose praises he aspires to proclaim to an admiring and appreciative audience; and, having done this, let him not doubt but that his discourse will be worthy of himself, his hearers, and his theme.

Before concluding this matter, it may be well to say a few words concerning sermons composed in honor of

[1] Quichiez, *Maximes sur le ministère de la chaire.*

the Blessed Virgin Mary; that is, sermons which may properly be considered as panegyrics of the Divine Mother, and not merely sermons on the Mysteries of Mary, as they are called.

Besplas[1] maintains that there are but two points of view in which the dignity of the Divine Mother can be reconciled with the exigencies of eloquence: viz., her Glory and her Dolours; but he goes on to add, with perfect truth, that these two considerations open up an inexhaustible mine of the richest materials to the sacred orator.

In the first point of view he can represent Mary as occupying a most important part in the economy of religion as associated in the figures of the Law and the Prophets with the glory of the Most High Himself. He may dwell upon her matchless dignity as developed in her titles of Daughter, of Spouse, of Mother, and of Queen; and thence he may draw richer pictures than were ever furnished to the genius of an orator by the most sublime of profane subjects.

If, on the other hand, he prefer to consider Mary in the interior dolours of her sufferings, he is furnished with no less fertile sources by which to interest and instruct his hearers. The soul of this august Mother, so intimately united with that of Jesus Christ; the picture of the sufferings of her Son, always present to her mind; in fine, the grand catastrophe of the passion and death of her Son under her very eyes, are surely subjects calculated of their own nature to

[1] *Essai sur l'éloquence de la chaire.*

inspire an orator, if he possess but one spark of the sacred fire.

If we leave these two essential points, the Glory of Mary and her Dolours, we run a great risk of going astray. The details of her life, hidden for the most part under an impenetrable veil, neither supply sufficient elements of fact certain to inspire admiration and enthusiasm, nor traits sufficiently remarkable and pronounced, to be worthy of so sublime a subject.

For the same reason, it is easy to see that, in treating this subject, the historical form presents many almost insuperable difficulties. The moral form would seem to be vastly preferable and more adapted for practical utility; since, as Mary is the model of all virtues, the diligent and zealous orator can always discover in her a never-failing source whence to derive materials for useful and attractive moral panegyrics.

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION.

Curam animarum habentes, per se vel alios idoneos, si legitimè impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus plebes sibi commissas, pro suâ et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis. . . . Si quis eorum præstare negligat, per censuras ecclesiasticas cogantur.

Præcepto divino mandatum est omnibus quibus animarum cura commissa est, oves suas . . . verbi divini prædicatione . . . pascere.

Concil. Trid. de Reform.

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION—ITS UNIVERSAL APPLICATION, NATURE, AND OBLIGATION, AS DEFINED BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT—REMARKS OF THE BISHOP OF ORLEANS—SPECIAL QUALITIES OF FAMILIAR INSTRUCTION, AND ITS LEADING SUBJECTS.

WHILST the Set Sermon holds, as we have already shown, its own place, and that a very clearly defined one, in the line of subjects with which it will be the duty and the pleasure of the preacher to deal, it is plain that what is commonly called "Familiar Instruction" will form the great staple of the discourse which he will deliver to the flock of Christ. We are the light of the world—*lux mundi*—because we are the teachers of the world; and we are the teachers of the world, because we are its instructors in all those ordinary and daily duties, the sum of which makes up the Christian life. Later on we shall show that the Set Sermon, excellent and obligatory as it is in its own time and place, can

never suffice to teach the Christian people their religion as a whole. They require something more; and this something we call Familiar Instruction, because it embraces the whole scope and theory of the Church's teaching, and delivers that teaching with such unity of design, in language so simple, and in terms so elementary, as to adapt itself to the weak and uneducated capacity of those who have ever formed, and will ever continue to constitute, the great majority of the flock of Christ.

Whether, therefore, it takes the form of a simple homily, a discourse on any of the Commandments, the Sacraments, or other kindred subjects, the ordinary Sunday sermon of the missionary priest will probably not rise, and ought not rise, above a Familiar Instruction.

A Familiar Instruction, in this sense, has been well explained to be, the simple and earnest discourse of a pastor, who is zealous to teach his people all those things which are useful and necessary for their salvation. By those things which are useful and necessary for their salvation, we understand, in a special manner, all the great fundamental truths of the Catholic Faith; the Commandments of God and His Church; the Christian virtues, and the means of acquiring them, as well as of avoiding the contrary vices; Prayer; and the Sacraments.

Such, in a general way, are the subjects which will form the matter of the Familiar Instruction—of that instruction which must necessarily be the ultimate foundation upon which the boldest strokes, the loftiest

flights, and the warmest appeals of the sacred orator are built. It does not follow that he who, as an ordinary rule, confines himself to Familiar Instruction, will, therefore, neglect those appeals to the passions, and those oratorical movements, which have so intimate a share in the full and complete success of the preacher's efforts; but it does most surely follow that, unless we are to be as men beating the air, all those efforts must be raised upon the foundation of clear, plain, solid, and well-connected instruction.

It is not necessary to repeat in this place that the obligation of instructing our people is identical with, or, rather, is the reducing to action of that divine commission which has been intrusted to us: *Euntes, docete omnes gentes.* Neither is it necessary to show that this instruction or teaching must embrace the whole theory of Christian belief and practice, since this is clearly included in the words of our commission: *Docentes eos servare* OMNIA QUÆCUMQUE *mandavi vobis.* Least of all, need we lay ourselves out to prove that this instruction will, as an ordinary rule, be of the most simple and elementary character; since, so long as the obligation shall remain upon us of preaching the Gospel to the poor and the simple, and so long as these shall constitute the great majority of our flocks, it is evident that such must be, in thought and expression, the nature of our teaching: *Pauperes evangelizantur.*

If, however, we had any difficulty in clearly understanding the nature and scope of our duty, in regard to the instruction of our people, it would at once be set at rest by the attentive consideration of the precept in

which the Council of Trent lays our obligations before us, explaining the whole of this most important matter in a few words, that are as plain as they are full, as simple as they are complete :—

"Quicumque parochiales, vel alias curam animarum habentes ecclesias quocumque modo obtinent, per se, vel alios idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis, et festis solemnibus, plebes sibi commissas pro sua, et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis; docendo, quæ scire omnibus necessarium est ad salutem; annunciandoque eis cum brevitate et facilitate sermonis, vitia, quæ eos declinare, et virtutes, quas sectari oporteat; ut pœnam æternam evadere, et cælestem gloriam consequi valeant. Id vero si quis eorum præstare negligat; etiam si ab episcopi jurisdictione, quavis ratione exemptum se esse prætenderet; etiam si ecclesiæ, quovis modo exemptæ dicerentur, aut alicui monasterio, etiam extra diœcesim existenti, forsan annexæ, vel unitæ, modo re ipsa in diœcesi sint, provida pastoralis episcoporum solicitudo non desit, ne illud impleatur: parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat, qui frangeret eis. Itaque, ubi ab episcopo moniti trium mensium spatio muneri suo defuerint, per censuras ecclesiasticas, seu alias ad ipsius episcopi arbitrium cogantur, ita ut etiam, si ei sic expedire visum fuerit, ex beneficiorum fructibus, alteri qui id præstet, honesta aliqua merces persolvatur, donec principalis ipse resipiscens officium suum impleat."—*De Reform*, sess. v. c. ii.

As we shall, when considering the subject of Catechetical Instruction, enter into a more minute exami-

nation of the precise extent of this obligation, it will suffice, in this place, to glance briefly at its great general principles.

And, first—It is evident that the Council places the obligation of instructing their people upon all those who have the charge of souls: *Quicumque parochiales ecclesias, vel alias curam animarum habentes quocumque modo obtinent.*

Secondly—It is equally evident that this instruction is to be given frequently: *Diebus saltem dominicis, et festis solemnibus.*

Thirdly—It is evident that this obligation is a grave one, since its violation is to be visited with a penalty which necessarily supposes a grave fault: *Si quis eorum præstare negligat, per censuras ecclesiasticas cogatur.*

Lastly, we may add, that the Sacred Council, not content with having thus laid down, with the utmost clearness and precision, the nature and the gravity of their duty in this matter, proceeds in another place, Sess. xxiv. c. iv., to warn the clergy that it does not mean, by all that has gone before, to exempt them from the further obligation of delivering to their flocks that peculiar teaching, and those instructions, which are specially adapted to certain seasons of the ecclesiastical year, or of which their people may stand in special need:—

"Tempore autem jejuniorum quadragesimæ et adventus Domini, quotidie, vel saltem tribus in hebdomada diebus, si ita oportere duxerint, sacras scripturas divinamque legem annuntient; et alias quotiescumque

id opportune fieri posse judicaverint. Moneatque episcopus populum diligenter teneri unumquemque parochiæ suæ interesse, ubi commode id fieri potest, ad audiendum verbum Dei."

Such, then, is the teaching of the Council of Trent on this important matter. Whilst, however, the Council thus insists upon the rigorous fulfilment of this sacred duty, the preacher will, at the same time, understand that there is here no question of those laboured and finished discourses which might well render this obligation truly onerous, and perhaps too heavy to be borne. If we are bound to instruct our people, it is on conditions so easy and light, that every man of good will may easily fulfil them. The learned Bishop of Orleans develops the mind of the Council on this point, in terms so exact and so simple, that we cannot do better than quote his beautiful explanation:—

"The Sacred Council," he says, "which imposes upon us the obligation of preaching, desires, above all, that instruction may be its very soul and essence: *Pascant salutaribus verbis, docendo.* The Council does not require from us pompous or finished orations, but pastoral teaching—that is to say, teaching which shall be useful, conducive to salvation, full of light and of life: *Salutaribus verbis Pascant.*

"There is no question here of speaking in a manner more or less polished, but of instructing and of teaching our people in such a manner that they may, after having listened to us, retire with a perfect knowledge of all those things necessary to salvation which they

knew not before, or which they knew but imperfectly: *Docendo.*

"And what are we bound to teach them? The answer of the Council is simple. All that they are bound to know in order to save their souls: *Docendo quæ scire omnibus necessarium ad salutem.*

"And let us remark, too, that there is no question of what is merely pleasing, or of what may be useful to certain members of our congregation, or to a select number of our hearers. Our discourses must be useful to all, embracing all those matters which are necessary for salvation: *Quæ scire omnibus necessarium est ad salutem.*

"To enter more into detail: And what are those things the knowledge of which are necessary for all men? All the truths of our faith; the precepts it imposes upon us, and the means which it affords us for working out our salvation: to wit; the symbol, the commandments of God and His Church, prayer, the sacraments, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, &c. In addition to this, all that may help to reform, or to increase the perfection of the Christian life; to preserve us from vice, and to aid us in the practice of virtue: *Vitia quæ eos declinare, virtutes quas sectari, oportet.*

"Moreover, the Council enjoins us to strengthen and confirm this grand scheme of Christian morality with the sanction of the Last Things of man, Heaven and Hell: *Ut pœnam æternam evadere, et cœlestem gloriam consequi, valeant.*

"Behold," concludes the illustrious Prelate, "what the Church, speaking through the Council of Trent, imposes

upon all those who have received the grave and solemn charge of souls: *Quicumque parochiales ecclesias obtinent.*"

Such, then, is our clear and bounden duty to the people whom God has committed to our charge. It is a duty the discharge of which would be grateful to the zealous pastor under any circumstances, and one which is surely not the less grateful because it happens to be so easy of fulfilment. There are many men who may well and fairly shrink from attempting the Set Sermon. There is surely no man, with the attainments which are essentially supposed by the priestly character, who cannot accomplish the Familiar Instruction. In this kind of discourse we are relieved at the very outset from most of the difficulties which surround the Set Sermon. We have no trouble about the selection of our subject; and none, or scarcely none in regard to its division and arrangement. The difficulties of style vanish when there is merely question of a simple and practical instruction. As it has been well remarked, what is frequently called difficulty of style is in reality difficulty of thought and conception. We are not able to speak elegantly because we have nothing to say. Our conceptions are vague, uncertain, and undefined; and, as a necessary consequence, our language partakes, perhaps to a painful degree, of these characteristics. But this can hardly be the case with a Familiar Instruction. Even a zealous and studious priest may not be able to conceive profound ideas, or lofty conceptions, on abtruse matters or on elevated themes; and hence, he may labour under a dryness and sterility of thought

which will effectually prevent him from attaining a perfect measure of success, if he attempt to handle subjects of this kind. But such a man, one zealous and fairly studious, can never fail, on this score at least, in the Familiar Instruction. He can never labour under sterility of thought or want of matter. His difficulty will rather be to confine the multiplicity of his ideas, and the abundance of his materials, within the due limits of his discourse. He must, from the very necessity of the case, and from the mere study of the works which he will consult, be possessed of a superfluity of clear, practical, and expedite ideas on this subject; and if he will but content himself with expressing these in language as simple and as clear as the ideas themselves, the success of his instruction will be secured.

Simplicity of conception and of expression should certainly be the leading characteristic of successful familiar instruction. Perhaps, too, it is specially necessary to dwell upon this point at the present time. Within the last few years there has been a great and a happy movement in the study of Sacred Eloquence. The clergy are daily becoming more and more alive to its vast importance in the age in which we live, and are daily applying themselves more and more assiduously to its cultivation. But a movement of this kind, salutary as it is in itself, is never free from certain dangers. Judging from Italy and France, the two countries in which Sacred Eloquence may be held in a particular manner to have its special home, these dangers are at the present moment sufficiently obvious; they have been clearly pointed out by those fully

competent to speak on such a subject; and we may usefully apply what has been said, *positis ponendis*, to ourselves and to our own position.

The danger, then, to which we refer is, lest the clergy, in the natural ardour of their prosecution of a study which may almost be said to have the charm of novelty about it, and captivated by the real and substantial attractions of oratorical pursuits, lose sight of that Christian simplicity which must ever be the essential characteristic of useful and practical instruction.

Speaking of the actual state of Sacred Eloquence in Italy, the learned Professor Audisio[1] thus expresses himself: "Whilst the study of letters in Italy does not lack, at the present day, many judicious cultivators, we are, nevertheless, constrained to confess that there is a deplorable tendency towards the development of a style which is full of mannerism, affected, and overloaded with ornament and flowers." And in order to combat this false tendency, he employs and adopts the wise sentiments of the Abbé Rosmini on this subject: "All pious and sensible men admit," says Rosmini, "that the ecclesiastical eloquence of Italy, at the present day, stands in need of reformation, and the Christian people anxiously expect it. This reformation must have its foundation in the introduction of a style more simple and less studied; in expression more becoming him who speaks; in doctrine more sound in its source and more logical in its form; but, above all, in instruction, which shall be clearer, better adapted to

[1] Audisio, tom. 2.

the intelligence of the people, more explicit, more closely connected, and more fitted to correct vice and to promote the practice of virtue."

Speaking of France, the Abbé Mullois, in his valuable work,[1] throws out some ideas on this matter which are equally suggestive and practical: "The popularity"—and by popularity he understands simplicity—"of Christian discourses has become rare, more especially in our towns. Instead of being satisfied with the life—the sap of that Gospel which has moved the world—preachers have deemed themselves obliged to call in the aid of philosophy, metaphysics, and distorted phraseology and rhetoric. . . . . The Divine Word has been bound, imprisoned, in a terminology, which many do not understand. The preacher speaks, but the man remains impassible and cold." . . . . And in another place he continues: "I repeat, it is all well enough that a few eminent men should treat such questions before select audiences; but now, everyone seems bent on talking philosophy, or on philosophizing about everything. We have the philosophy of theology, the philosophy of the sacraments, the philosophy of the liturgy: and to what does it all tend? To prove that God might have occupied a prominent place among the thinkers of these times: which would be proving very little in God's favour."

This tendency to philosophize—to go off into useless and intricate speculations—is so essentially opposed to the simplicity of conception and expression, which

[1] *The Clergy and the Pulpit:* Smith, Elder and Co.

should be the leading characteristic of successful familiar instruction, that, although it may not, as yet, be very obvious, or very practically dangerous amongst ourselves, we have thought fit to draw the young preacher's attention to it, and to put him earnestly on his guard against being led away by this attractive and natural delusion.

With these preliminary observations on the obligation and nature of Familiar Instruction, we now proceed to consider, more in detail, the great leading subjects which will be handled by the preacher in his discharge of this portion of his duty: viz., I. The Homily, or ordinary Sunday Sermon; II. A Course of Religious Instruction; III. Catechetical Teaching.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOMILY.

SECTION I.

The Antiquity, Nature, and Great Utility of this Form of Discourse.

THE Homily, the discourse which the pastor of souls will ordinarily employ, is at once the most simple, the most practically useful, and the most ancient form of the Sunday Sermon.

In the first ages of the Church, a lector was accustomed to read, during Divine Service, a certain portion of the Holy Scriptures. When he had concluded, the bishop took up the subject, commented on what had been read, deduced from it those practical conclusions which he wished to impress upon his flock, insisted upon such reformation of manners as he deemed necessary, and concluded with a lively exhortation to the practice of virtue, and the avoiding of vice. Sometimes, in this explanation, he would confine himself to the consideration of one verse alone: at other times he might comment on a larger portion of what had been read, and with a more varied development of the subject, as occasion might seem to require. But, whether a verse or a chapter formed the foundation of

his discourse, the bishop never left the particular book of Holy Writ on which he happened to be engaged, until it had been thoroughly considered, explained, and enforced.

Such was the origin of the Homily, and such the method followed in its delivery. Its simplicity recommended it most powerfully both to preacher and people; just as the Homily properly understood, conscientiously prepared, and earnestly delivered, is, *omnibus pensatis*, the most popular form of discourse in our day.

There is, however, one difference between the Homily as described above, and the Homily of modern times. Although substantially following the plan of the ancients in all essential matters, modern preachers do not, as a general rule, in their ordinary Sunday sermons, confine themselves to the consideration of some one book of Holy Writ until it is exhausted; on the contrary, instead of thus confining themselves to the examination of some one book, they take, as the subject of their common Sunday sermon, the Gospel or the Epistle of the day, as they deem most useful; and hence, the modern Homily may be described as a simple and practical explanation of the Gospel, or the Epistle, of the day, with a view of instructing our hearers in the truths of their religion, and of persuading them to the fervent and constant practice of all the duties of their state of life.

The Homily, thus understood, will always be most popular with priest and people. There are few missionary priests who can find leisure to devote to the

composition of a Set Sermon for every Sunday, or even for many Sundays, in the year. Besides, as we have shown, when considering that subject, it is not expedient to preach Set Sermons too frequently; and this is evident from the very idea and the object of these discourses. The Homily being much more simple, demands much less labour in its composition, whilst it can, in its own time and place, be made equally effective with the Set Sermon; and these considerations will always be quite sufficient to recommend it to the hard-worked missionary priest.

The reasons which recommend the Homily to an audience are very plain and evident. In the first place, from the very simplicity of its arrangement and composition, it can be more readily adapted to a variety of reflections, and to the various wants of an audience, than the Set Sermon, which is generally devoted to the consideration of one or two great leading truths—truths which may be without much interest, and very difficult of application, to many individuals in our audience. Then, these reflections, resting as they do immediately upon the Word of God, possess an authority and weight which are incomparably superior to the most logical arguments, and the most ingenious deductions of the orator. Moreover, the Homily admits of practical details, which are more or less incompatible with the finished discourse; and being made up of truths and reflections, which are, so to speak, independent of one another (although in this the principal objection which is advanced against the Homily is founded), it provides better for those distractions which

are inevitable in a congregation. If we are carried away by distraction during the Set Sermon, we most likely lose the thread of the discourse, and, losing it, lose our interest in the preacher and his subject. But, in the Homily, if we happen to lose one truth, we can avail ourselves of some other, and thus be certain of deriving positive profit from the discourse.

For these, and for many other reasons, we shall always find that, for practical and every-day use, our people will prefer the Homily to any other form of discourse. They follow, with the greatest interest, him who explains the Gospel to them with clearness, and in tones of earnest conviction; who draws their attention to its salient points; and who brings home to them those natural deductions, and those practical conclusions, which are the essential fruit of such considerations. Learning thus, almost without effort, the truths of their religion, and the obligations which are imposed upon them by Holy Writ, they are satisfied and pleased with the discourse which has been productive of such happy results. They neither demand nor expect from the pastor more than he can easily give them; and whilst he is able to explain the Holy Gospel to them with clearness, with ease, and with earnestness, they are quite content, no matter how simple the substance, the composition, and the style of such explanation may be. Truly a desirable end to be gained, and one which can be gained by the zealous pastor of souls with very little trouble!

Such are the leading ideas to be borne in mind in regard to the nature, object, and salient points of the

Homily. There are three principal methods of composing this kind of discourse, each of which we shall now proceed briefly to consider.

SECTIO 1.

First Method of Composing the Homily.

The Nature of this Method, and the Principal Objection which is urged against it.

The first method of composing the Homily consists in taking the Gospel or Epistle of the day and explaining the whole of it, verse by verse; drawing from each verse, more or less fully as circumstances may suggest, those reflections and moral conclusions which flow naturally from it. Changing thus, at almost every verse, the matter of his sermon, the preacher has full scope to attack in the same discourse many vices, or to inculcate the practice of many virtues, whilst each of the audience will be pretty certain to find in this variety something suited to his own peculiar wants. This is the first method of composing the Homily, and it is undoubtedly the easiest, as it is the most conformable to the primitive practice, and the primitive idea of this kind of discourse.

Supposing the preacher to adopt this method, he will do well to attend to the following rules, most of which are thrown out by Gaichiez :[1]

In the exordium he will give a brief but succinct

[1] *Maximes sur le ministère de la chaire.*

history of the portion of Holy Writ, which he is about to explain, showing its relation to the office or solemnity of the day, or its applicability to the circumstances and necessities of his hearers.

After this introduction, he will explain, in a simple but lively and interesting manner, the entire Gospel or Epistle, verse by verse. He will insist especially upon those passages which are most powerful to interest, to move, and to bring forth practical fruit in his audience; and he will observe, as closely as circumstances will permit, the ordinary oratorical gradations of a discourse.

He will conclude his instruction with a brief but earnest exhortation, endeavouring to make the effect of this exhortation turn mainly upon the point or points upon which he dwelt most forcibly in his explanation. By diligent attention to these ideas, and more especially to the one just mentioned, he will best remedy, as far as it can be remedied, the one great drawback to the success of this form of Homily, to which we are now to refer more fully.

Guided by the authority of all great masters of Sacred Eloquence, we have frequently laid down, as an indisputable principle, that all true eloquence must have unity for its foundation. Now, it is evident, that in the form of Homily described above, there is no real unity; and, precisely for this reason, St. Francis of Sales, whose authority carries great weight with it, is of opinion that discourses of this kind are not calculated to produce much lasting fruit. This manner of running over the whole Gospel or Epistle of the day, he says, is not very fruitful, since the preacher, being unable to dwell

powerfully upon, or to develop fully, any one great leading idea, is, of course, unable to bring any such idea home to the hearts of his hearers with a force that will cause it to produce real and solid fruit. These principles concerning the nature and necessity of unity will be found fully developed in "Sacred Eloquence."[1]

This is the one great objection to this kind of Homily, and our readers will admit that it is sufficiently grave and real. Fenelon, whose opinion is certainly worthy of respect, does not, however, seem to make much of it, since he pronounces unhesitatingly in favour of this method of composing the Homily. He holds that the preacher who follows this method necessarily confines himself, in explaining a portion of Scripture verse by verse, to give expression to the thoughts and the words of God Himself. The discourse, thus containing nothing which can be strictly said to be of human invention, obtains for itself a sanction and authority which it could not possibly otherwise possess. Thus, he writes,[2] the preacher secures two ends at once. Whilst he explains the truths of the Gospel, he, at the same time, explains the text of Scripture, and teaches his hearers to join the meaning with the letter; and thus accustoming them to nourish themselves with this sacred food, he confers upon them an advantage which can never be sufficiently estimated.

Each one will judge for himself in this matter. If we might venture to give an opinion upon a point in which writers of eminence differ so widely, we should

[1] Sacred Eloquence. 3rd Edition, p. 83, *et seq.* [2] Dial. sur l'éloq.

be inclined to endorse that of the learned Mons. J. B. Van Hemel, who considers that this form of Homily is not the one best adapted for ordinary use, although it may be employed with profit, from time to time, with an audience sufficiently fervent and well-instructed not to require more precise instruction, nor more pointed exhortation, than is thus afforded them.

SECTION III.

Second Method.

Nature of this Method—its Advantages over the First.

The second method consists in dividing the whole Homily into two leading points or parts. In the first part, the preacher, without, however, tying himself down to explain it verse by verse, gives a brief, clear, and interesting explanation of the entire Gospel or Epistle of the day; more or less after the manner we have just described when speaking of the first kind of Homily. In the second part, he deduces those moral conclusions, and those practical resolutions, which are suggested by his subject and the special necessities of his flock, and concludes with an exhortation delivered in accordance with the general rules of Sacred Eloquence.

This is the method generally followed by St. John Chrysostom in the composition of his moral Homilies, and, although not quite so simple as the first, would seem to be more practically useful, as being more in

accord with the principles of Eloquence, and more powerfully adapted for the attainment of a special end.

Although the principle of unity is not rigorously applied even in this method, the order of the discourse need not be unpleasantly irregular, nor inartistically disconnected. As is evident, it is not difficult to render this form of Homily subservient to the inculcation of some one practical truth. The parables of our Divine Lord always shadow forth some one practical truth, and they can be readily treated according to this method. Let us take, as an example, the beautiful parable of the Prodigal. In the first point of this Homily, the preacher might dwell upon the departure and the return of the prodigal, with all the circumstances connected therewith. In the second part, he might develop, enforce, and apply the great truth which is taught under this parable: viz., the merciful goodness of God towards the sinner who returns to Him with sorrow and regret. And no discourse could be more interesting, or more useful, than one composed in conformity with these ideas.

In Homilies of this kind, although strict unity of view may not be possible, there is always unity of end, and the necessity of keeping this end ever before us will secure a sufficient order of arrangement, and a sufficient unity in the means which we employ for its attainment.

This form of Homily, being free to a great extent from the irregularity and want of unity which are inseparable from the discourses composed according to

the first method, and being much more simple and less formal, and thus requiring less preparation than the Set Sermon, will always be much employed by the hard-worked Missionary Priest. His own ever-growing experience will be his best guide in this matter, and the man whose heart is in his work will soon discover which method of preparation suits his own powers the best, and is best adapted to gain the end which he necessarily proposes to himself. A diligent and practical application of the ideas thrown out above will render the preparation of this kind of Homily as easy, as its results will be satisfactory and full of solid fruit.

SECTION IV.

Third Method.

Peculiar Nature and Excellency of this Method—Plan of Massillon's Homily on the Raising of Lazarus—Practical Suggestions to be kept in view when Preparing a Homily according to this Method.

The third method of composing the Homily consists in reducing the whole Gospel or Epistle of the day to one single proposition, which is subjected to the rules of the ordinary division, and arranged in accordance with all the laws which regulate the composition of the Set Sermon.

This form of Homily holds, as is evident, a kind of middle place between the Homily, strictly so called, and the formal discourse

It partakes of the nature of the Homily in this, that the proposition of the discourse is deduced, not from some one text of Scripture, but from the general consideration of the Gospel or Epistle of the day, and it naturally admits of greater simplicity of style and of composition. It partakes of the nature of the Set Sermon, since the whole Gospel or Epistle, as we have just said, is reduced to one single proposition which is arranged, developed, and enforced in accordance with all the rules which govern the formal discourse. We have included this kind of discourse under the head of the Homily, because it is the shape which the Sermon will, as a general rule, assume; and because the ordinary Sunday Sermon of the Missionary Priest will necessarily partake very largely of the simplicity of idea, of composition, and of style, which are characteristic of the Homily.

Many eminent modern writers[1] do not hesitate to affirm that this kind of Homily is the only one which is really worthy of the name. In this form of Homily we have perfect unity, since, from the general consideration of the Gospel or Epistle of the day, the preacher deduces some one precise proposition to whose development the whole discourse is devoted. We have method, arrangement, and order, because all the parts of the discourse are subordinate to the general end, and tend to its establishment. And we may have that dignity of style, and that warmth, as well of expression as of appeal to the feelings, which lend its greatest

[1] Audisio, Gisbert, &c., &c.

charm to the Set Sermon, since this form of Homily is quite susceptible, in a higher or lower degree, of all these oratorical movements.

Père Gisbert goes so far as to say, and with great reason, that Homilies composed in accordance with these ideas, where unity of view and of means is thus rigorously secured, are to be preferred to the more laboured efforts, and the more finished and ambitious style, of the formal discourse. The reason he gives is this: In the Homily, whatever is said is founded immediately and directly upon the word of God. The preacher does not aspire to become the creator of new ideas and of deep and far-fetched thoughts. He is content to seek and to find his inspiration in the word of God, and in the simple sources of natural eloquence. He will thus frequently come upon pearls; whilst the more ambitious orator, who is too solicitous to draw upon his own resources, and to develop the brilliancy of his own great genius, will bring forth ideas which will be barren of fruit, and tend neither to the glory of God, nor the salvation of souls. In other words, whilst the grand sermon of the finished and ambitious orator may fill his hearers with astonishment at his talents, and delight at his eloquence, the Homily of him who founds his discourse immediately upon the Word of God, and who labours with simple zeal to bring the truth home, in all its force, to the hearts of his hearers, will convert and win them to God.

The three conditions to which we have referred above—unity, order, and earnest appeal to the

feelings—indicate sufficiently the characteristics of this form of Homily, and in this respect there is no substantial difference between such a discourse and the formal sermon.

Audisio, in his learned work,[1] shows, with the greatest clearness and perspicuity, how these principles are applied by Massillon in his magnificent Homily on the raising of Lazarus. As precepts are always most forcible when illustrated by examples, we gladly avail ourselves of the explanations of the learned writer on this matter.

The grand idea which at once strikes us most forcibly when studying this Homily in its moral signification, is the state of the soul which wallows habitually in sin, and the method of its cure.

The exordium of the discourse, in conformity with the method to be followed in the composition of the Homily, consists of a simple narrative of the Gospel History. If the preacher desired to make his discourse assume the form of the Set Sermon rather than that of the Homily, he might omit this material narration, whilst, at the same time, he could preserve the spirit of it, by showing that many of the parallels to be found in the Gospel, have, for their special end, to inspire us with horror at the deplorable state of the soul which lives in mortal sin.

Either way, the preacher arrives naturally at his proposition, which may be divided into three points: I. The horrible state of the soul which lives habitually

[1] Audisio, tom 2, p. 222.

in mortal sin: II. The means of escaping from this state: III. The motives which move Jesus Christ to rescue the sinner from this state.

These three points embrace the Gospel History in all its bearings, and provide the preacher with a fund of most useful and most interesting ideas and truths to be developed.

Massillon demonstrates the first of these points by a consideration of the great leading circumstances which complete the horrible state of the habitual sinner.

I. The sinner dies by his rejection of the spirit of God through which alone man lives. He becomes a corpse, filled within and without with a most horrible odour of corruption. Within, through the perversion of the choicest gifts of nature and grace: without, by the infamous scandal of his life. *Jam fœtet.*

II. His eyes are blinded to the horrible state in which he lives with so much content. *Et facies illius sudario erat ligata.*

III. He groans under the weight of the cruel and infamous slavery of which he is the victim. *Ligatus pedes et manus institis.*

In the history of Lazarus, as embraced in these three circumstances, we have the clearest picture of the soul dead in the state of sin, already laid in the tomb, and exhaling the horrible odour which belongs to a decaying corpse.

In the second point of the discourse the preacher indicates the means of returning to God.

I. The first of these means is confidence in God,

founded on the words of Jesus Christ to Martha: *Qui credit in me, etiamsi mortuus fuerit, vivet; et omnis qui vivit et credit in me, non morietur in æternum:* and on the words of Martha to Christ: *Utique, Domine, ego credidi, quia tu es Christus filius Dei vivi qui in hunc mundum venisti.*

II. The second means is the flight of occasions. *Tollite lapidem.*

III. The third is the Sacrament of Penance. *Lazare, veni foras; solvite eum, et sinite abire.*

The resurrection of Lazarus thus furnishes the preacher with all the ideas which he needs in order to paint, with the greatest clearness, the means to be taken by the sinner to raise himself from the state of sin.

In the third point of the discourse, the preacher dwells upon those motives which moved Jesus Christ to raise Lazarus from the tomb, and which influence Him in raising sinners from their state of sin to grace.

I. The first of these motives is supplied by the prayers of those just souls who are represented by the good sisters of Lazarus, who immediately had recourse to Jesus in their great trouble at the loss of their brother. *Ecce, quem amas, infirmatur.*

II. The second motive is furnished by His desire to reprove the little faith of the wavering and incredulous by the consoling sight which He gives us from time to time of the sudden and complete conversion of notorious sinners. *Gaudeo propter vos, ut credatis.*

III. That thus He may deprive all slothful or

obstinate sinners of those pretexts through which they remain in their sinful state.

We have here the entire Homily reduced to three leading points, which represent the history of Lazarus with the utmost clearness, and in the strongest light; whilst each of these points is most intimately united with the grand idea which the orator proposes to himself to develop: viz., "the state of a soul in the habit of sin. We have unity, order, morality, argument, feeling—in one word, we find united in this Homily all that lends force, beauty, strength, and power to a sacred discourse."

After the above description of the manner in which Massillon handles this subject, we venture to hope that the young preacher will have a pretty clear idea of the method he is to follow in the composition of the Homily which he will present to his people on ordinary occasions. He will also understand more clearly, from this example, the extent to which this form of Homily partakes of the principal characteristics of the Formal Discourse; whilst his own experience in using it, will soon teach him that it admits of a simplicity of style and of composition which are not so easily applied to the Set Sermon. Most of the Gospels or Epistles of any particular Sunday, and more especially the parables of our Divine Lord, can be readily used after this method, and reduced to one great, leading idea. Thus, the Gospel history of the Magdalen readily reduces itself to the consideration of her sin, and of her perfect reconciliation with God; and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican evidently teaches us the dif-

ferent effects of pride and of humility. And so of the rest.

Supposing him to possess a sufficient and expedite knowledge of the general principles of Sacred Eloquence, the young preacher will, by diligent application of the ideas just thrown out, have no difficulty in preparing his ordinary Sunday's discourse. There is, however, one delusion against which he must be most earnestly on his guard. Although the Homily is, of its nature, more simple, and requires less labour in its preparation than the Formal Discourse, it does not, therefore, follow that the young preacher can presume to dispense himself from that earnest labour, and that diligent preparation, which are demanded even by this simple form of sermon, and without which he should not dare to appear before his flock. The general laws that "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well," and that "Nothing is done well without trouble and labour," suffer no exception in the case of the Sunday's Homily. And it is because so many preachers either lose sight of these principles, or despise them, that we are so frequently condemned to listen to Homilies, of which all that can be said is, that they are equally cold and insipid, empty and fruitless.

But the man who is in earnest, and who thoroughly realizes the extent, not only of his privileges, but of his obligations, will devote to his Homily that preparation, be it more or less, which is essential to its success. He will commence by studying carefully the text of the Gospel, or Epistle, which he intends to explain. He will meditate it deeply, so as to obtain a clear concep-

tion of the precise points upon which he should insist; since it is evident that in the ordinary Homily he cannot dwell upon every circumstance, nor exhaust his subject in its every detail. And, thus studying, he will attend most especially to four points: the literal sense of the passage; its moral and spiritual meaning; the practical consequences which flow from it; and the exhortations which it is fitting he should make to his people on it.

In order to explain the literal sense of the passage, he will attend to the time, the occasion, and the other circumstances, which throw a light upon the fact, or the maxim, which he is engaged in considering. He will explain those passages which are obscure, and, in order to do this more fully, he will, when occasion permits or requires it, show the bearing of the usages of the Old Law upon the matter in point. If he has taken one of the parables as the subject of his discourse, he will only develop the letter of it, in order to bring out more clearly its spirit, and he will dwell much more forcibly upon its design than upon those historical circumstances which are merely its accessories, and, as such, of minor importance. And, when necessary, he will deduce from the text those reflections, dogmatical or moral, which his own study, or the natural fecundity of his subject, suggests.

In his explanation of the moral or spiritual meaning of which his subject is susceptible, he will select those considerations which are most simple and natural, most redolent of piety, and best adapted to the special necessities of his audience. He will avoid those

forced interpretations, and those allegorical meanings, which we find in the Homilies of St. Augustine and of St. Gregory, of whom we may say, without irreverence, that, had they lived in our times, they would have employed a different style. The allegorical meaning and strained interpretations which we frequently meet with in the Homilies of these saints, were as much in accordance with the spirit of the age in which they wrote, as they are in opposition to the tastes and requirements of our time.

In his diligent application of his practical conclusions to the special wants and necessities of his special audience, he will carefully bear in mind the general principles already laid down on this matter.[1]

Finally, remembering that a sermon is, of its nature, a persuasive oration, and that the Homily in a special manner partakes of this character, he will exhort his hearers, with all the earnestness of which he is capable, to reduce to daily practice those lessons of piety and of virtue which he has deduced from his subject. If he bear these things in mind, the Homily of the zealous preacher will ever tend to appeal to the better feelings of his hearers; to move those who are in sin, to win them from vice, to excite them to the practice of virtue, to write upon the hearts of all impressions at once as strong as they are sweet, as consoling as they are terrible.[2] Such is ever the special characteristic of the Homily considered in its true light. Whilst

[1] Sacred Eloquence, p. 246, *et seq.* 3rd Edit.

[2] Dupanloup. *Entretiens sur la Prédication populaire.*

it never loses sight of that leading idea, and of that practical conclusion, which are as essential to its perfect success as to that of every other form of discourse—whilst the Homily passes rapidly over the mere accessories which may culminate around this leading idea, in order to develop or bring it out more and more strongly—whilst it ever aspires to lay a solid foundation of explanation and instruction, and to deduce those practical conclusions and moral reflections which naturally flow from such instruction—it equally remembers that its principal end is to exhort, and, by such exhortation, to lead men to better and more holy lives. Avoiding empty speculations, and far-fetched ideas which are redolent, not of God and the things of God, but of the wit and ingenuity of their author, the true Homily addresses itself, directly and immediately, to the souls of men, and by the very simplicity of its style, and the burning zeal which is equally displayed in its composition and its delivery, it often wins its hearers more surely to the service of God, and to the fervent practice of every Christian virtue, than the formal discourse and the laboured oration, which surpass the modest Homily as much in composition and in style, as they are inferior to it in those qualities which alone secure solid fruit and lasting success: viz., that earnestness of thought and of word, of desire and of act, which is inspired by true zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of the souls for whom Christ died.

CHAPTER III.

A COURSE OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

SECTION I.

What is meant by a Course of Instruction—Its Utility and Necessity—Catechism of the Council of Trent—Matter of such a Course—Special Characteristics of every Good Instruction.

ANOTHER form which the familiar discourse will frequently take, is that which is known as a series, or course, of Religious Instruction; or, in other words, a series of methodical and strictly connected discourses, devoted to the explanation of some leading portion of Christian Belief or Christian Practice, as the Creed, the Commandments, or, it may be, the History of the Christian Religion. It is at once evident in what such a course of religious instruction differs from the Homily. The Homily is complete in itself, and independent of the discourse which may precede or follow it; whilst in a course of religious instruction, each sermon has a strict connection with that which has gone before, and with that which is to follow. In such a course of instructions there is unity of view, not only as regards each sermon in particular, but also as regards the subject in

general which may be under consideration; since each discourse is a necessary link in a chain which, without such link, will be imperfect, and, perhaps, useless. Thus, a preacher who, undertaking to give a course of instructions on the Commandments, should either transpose the order of them, or altogether omit any of them, would necessarily interfere, more or less essentially, with the success of his lectures.

The utility and the absolute necessity of thus imparting to our people, from time to time, such a course of methodical and strictly connected instruction as we have described above, can scarcely be overrated.

Without such a course of instruction as may embrace the whole circle of Christian teaching, it is almost impossible, for the great majority of the faithful, ever to acquire that clear, expedite, and sufficient knowledge of their religion which is essential to salvation. Whence arise the most disheartening difficulties which meet us in the sacred tribunal, and even at the beds of the dying? It is not from their ignorance of essential truths, and from the great difficulty which we experience in imparting to them, at such times and in such trying circumstances, that amount of knowledge without which we dare not presume to administer God's holy sacraments to them, no matter how grievous their necessity may be? And yet, at least as regards many of these poor souls, how could it have been otherwise with them? It may be that, when they were young, they learned the letter of the catechism, most likely without ever fully, or even nearly fully, understanding its meaning. The only instruction which

they have received since that time, has probably been neither more nor less than what they have been able to gather from those vague, disconnected, and, perhaps, unpractical discourses, to which they may have listened from Sunday to Sunday. We may even grant that these discourses have been all they ought; but, delivered without necessary connection or unity of view, they could never suffice, as we shall show a little later on, to teach a man the *tout ensemble* of his religion as such. "There is neither art nor science in the world," says Fenelon, "whose professors do not teach it in a connected manner, by the aid of settled principles, and with order and method. It is only the science of religion, which its professors pretend to teach without order and without method. In their infancy we teach the faithful the catechism, which they learn by heart, perhaps without comprehending its meaning; and the only instruction which they receive after this is by means of dry and disconnected discourses. I wish much that we began by teaching our Christian people the first elements of their faith, and thus lead them on by degrees to the comprehension of its most sublime mysteries."

These beautiful words express at once the utility and the scope of such a course of instruction—a course of instruction which will impart to our hearers that light which is essential; which will bring their religion, its history, its dogmas, and its morality before them, with a clearness of conception, and a unity of design, the beauty of which they cannot possibly overlook; which will enable them to give a reason for the motives and the objects of the faith that is in them; which, in fine

will fill them with admiration for the religion whose truths are the essential parts of one grand whole, a whole so united and cemented by the finger of God as to fill the reverent believer with awe and with love.

Nor is such a course of instruction less necessary than useful. It is, as we have insinuated above, the only means by which the great majority of the faithful will ever acquire that clear, expedite, and perfect knowledge of their religion which is absolutely essential. It is quite possible, and very likely, too, for a pastor of souls who does not lay himself out to give from time to time these courses of instruction, to preach for twenty years without ever explaining to his people the mystery of the Trinity, &c., &c. He selects the subjects of his Sunday's discourse without unity of view, or without other order than may be suggested by the Gospel of the day. For twenty years, perhaps, he thus, Sunday after Sunday, devotes himself to the consideration of what we may fairly call isolated subjects. The sermon of to-day has no necessary connection with the discourse of the preceding, or, the following Sunday. Is it not morally certain that, in this mode of action, he will be certain to overlook some matters, the knowledge of which is necessary, *necessitate medii* or *necessitate præcepti*. This danger is, of course, vastly increased in those large parishes in which there may be half a dozen, or a dozen priests, who preach in their turn but without any mutual understanding or agreement as to the order of the subjects to be treated. Does not our own experience bear us out in this? Would it be impossible to discover parishes in which,

perhaps, for twenty years, the people have never heard an instruction on the Trinity, the Incarnation, the sacrament of Extreme Unction, &c., &c., although they may have attended church quite regularly? No. Instead of looking to the wants of his people, instead of laying himself out to instruct them, or to keep alive in their hearts the saving knowledge of the rudiments of their faith, the pastor, perhaps, looked in the first place to what came most easy to himself. Hence he never cast his eyes beyond the Gospel of the day for the subject of his discourse. It never entered into his mind to interrupt for a few weeks the run of the ordinary Sunday sermon, to give a course of methodical and connected instructions, as the necessities of his flock or his own zealous prudence might suggest. And so it has come to pass, and surely it must be a miserable reflection for him, that some, perhaps many, of those who have been most assiduous in their attendance at divine worship, are labouring under gross ignorance of even essential truths. If they were ever thoroughly instructed in their catechism when they were young, and if they ever *understood* it, they may, perhaps, keep alive the bare knowledge which is essential, by means of the Sunday discourse, as it is ordinarily delivered. If they did not thus acquire this salutary knowledge in their early days, they will most certainly not acquire it from the ordinary Sunday preaching. And it is in this, precisely, that we may look for the explanation of the fact that there is so little fruit after so much preaching. Our sermons are without fruit because they suppose in our hearers an amount of instruction—even elementary

instruction, on religious matters—which, unfortunately for themselves, and in many instances for their pastors, they do not possess.

There is scarcely any way—certainly no way half so easy—of meeting this very grave inconvenience, as by means of a series of simple, methodical, and connected instructions on the great principles of belief and of practice which are to regulate the life of the Christian man.

It would be obviously impossible, in the limits of a work like this, to indicate, still less to develop, all those matters of belief and of practice, which the zealous pastor of souls may take as the subject of his course of instructions. Fortunately, we have them arranged ready to our hand, in that most admirable work, the Catechism of the Council of Trent,[1] which, containing in the clearest and most simple manner, the whole substance of the Church's teaching, and coming to us with the sanction of the Church's authority, is invaluable to the missionary priest, and should be ever within his reach. Following it, he can never go astray, as he can never be in want of the most solid, practical, and authoritative matter for his instructions. We cannot better explain the scope of this incomparable work than in the words of its learned translator into English:—

"To the pastor, upon whom devolves the duty of public instruction, the 'Catechismus ad Parochos' presents peculiar advantages. In its pages he will

[1] The *Catechism of the Council of Trent.* Translated into English. Duffy: Dublin and London.

discover a rich treasure of theological knowledge, admirably adapted to purposes of practical utility. The entire economy of religion he will there find developed to his view—the majesty of God, the nature of the divine essence—the attributes of the Deity, their transcendent operations—the creation of man, his unhappy fall—the promise of a Redeemer, the mysterious and merciful plan of redemption—the establishment of the Church, the marks by which it is to be known and distinguished—the awful sanction with which the divine law is fenced round, the rewards that await and animate the good, the punishments that threaten and awe the wicked—the nature, number, and necessity of those supernatural aids instituted by the divine goodness to support our weakness in the arduous conflict for salvation—the Law delivered in thunder on Sinai, embracing the various duties of man under all the relations of his being—finally, the nature, necessity, and conditions of that heavenly intercourse that should subsist between the soul and its Creator; the exposition of that admirable prayer composed by the Son of God—all this, comprehending as it does, the whole substance of doctrinal and practical religion, and at once instructive to pastor and people, the reader will find in the 'Catechismus ad Parochos,' arranged in order, expounded with perspicuity, and sustained by argument at once convincing and persuasive."

At the same time, of course, the pastor is not bound to follow the order observed in the Catechism of the Council of Trent. It is, however, to be presumed that he will scarcely improve upon it. Whatever order of

arrangement he may follow, the matter which will form the subject of his instructions will come back, in one shape or another, to the following heads:—I. The truths which we are bound to believe, as the Creed; II. That which we are bound to practise, as the Commandments of God and His Church; III. The vices which we are bound to avoid, as the Capital Sins; IV. The aids which we are bound to receive, as the Sacraments; V. The means which we are bound to employ in order to obtain our requests, as Prayer; VI. Although not, perhaps, so essentially, the History of Religion.

It is evident at a glance that there is no point of Christian belief or practice which will not fall under one or other of these heads, and be treated in its proper time.

It would, as we said above, be obviously impossible in this place to speak of all these matters in detail; neither is it necessary. In laying down the rules by which discourses on the Divine Perfections, &c., the Mysteries, &c., are to be regulated, we have sufficiently indicated the method to be followed, *positis ponendis*, in treating those subjects which will naturally come under the head of the Creed.

Then, again, it would be very difficult to assign fixed rules by which individual preachers, who differ so much in imagination and in perception, could be governed when treating such a subject as the History of Religion, which, after all, will probably be but seldom taken by the ordinary missionary priest as the matter of his course of instructions.

We shall, therefore, perhaps, best consult the wishes

of the student, and the necessities of the case, by laying down a few general rules which may be profitably employed in developing the subjects which come under the following heads :—

I. Instructions on the Virtues and Vices.

II. Instructions on the Sacraments.

III. Instructions on Prayer.

There is not much to be said regarding the mere composition of the instructions which form the parts of a Course; neither is it necessary to remind the young preacher that order and clearness will be their special characteristics.

The most fitting introduction to an instruction of this nature will consist of a brief repetition of the discourse which preceded it, in order to show more clearly the order and connection, as well between the two as between the various sermons which make up the series. After this introduction, the preacher will then proceed to unfold and explain the subject to be developed, either according to the general rules of eloquence, or those particular ones to be presently laid down. During the course of the instruction, he will not fail to intermingle with his mere explanations, such reflections as he deems most suitable to nourish piety, to enliven faith, and to produce solid reformation of manners. He will take sufficient care not unduly to break the thread of the discourse, and will conclude by a warm and earnest exhortation, suggesting such resolutions as may be most analogous to the subject in hand.

CHAPTER IV.

A COURSE OF INSTRUCTIONS ON THE COMMANDMENTS; THE VIRTUES AND THE VICES.

SECTION I.

General Principles to be kept in View.

FOREMOST amongst those matters which the pastor of souls will take, from time to time, as the subject of a Course of Instructions, will be the Commandments of God and His Church, since these commandments contain an epitome of the great virtues to be practised, and the vices to be avoided, by the Christian man; and the Catechism of the Council of Trent lays down, with great clearness, the obligations of the pastor on this point.[1]

A course of instructions on the Commandments, whilst it is most simple and interesting, is, at the same time, of the greatest utility. The pastor of souls, exercising a prudent discretion in these matters, will, in such a course of instruction, proceed with order, method, and regularity. He will commence with the first Commandment, and thoroughly explain to his people as well the virtues which it enjoins as the vices which it forbids. If it should require half-a-dozen

[1] *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, Part III. chap. i. quest. ii. Duffy: Dublin and London.

lectures fully to exhaust his subject, he will not consider either his own labour or the time of his hearers thrown away. When he is satisfied that he has sufficiently explained one Commandment, he may pass on to the next, and so until the course is complete.

It is obviously impossible to lay down rules for the treatment of each particular virtue or vice. The most we can hope to do—and, in truth, no more is necessary—is to establish great general principles which the zeal and discretion of the pastor may apply to particular subjects; and this is the method which we propose to pursue in the consideration of this and kindred matters.

In order, then, to treat with due force and effect that class of subjects which will necessarily be embraced in a course of Instructions on the Commandments, we may lay down, as general propositions, that: The virtue or vice of which there is question must be defined and explained with the utmost clearness and precision; the motives for embracing the one, or avoiding the other, must be urged with all the power at our command; the means to be adopted in either case must be lucidly explained; and, the whole discourse must be arranged and divided with the greatest care. And such is the order followed by M. Hamon in his learned work.[1]

[1] *Traité de la Prédication.*

SECTION II.

Method of Explaining any Virtue or Vice.

Those who require to know all that can possibly be said on the nature, character, marks, &c., of the different virtues or vices, will find such information in the magnificent *Summa* of St. Thomas.

It is needless to remark that the first great requisite in such instructions as we are now engaged in considering, is to give our hearers a clear, precise, and exact idea of the nature of the virtue or the vice which forms the subject of the discourse in hand. Many of the faithful, even of those who are well instructed in worldly matters, have but very indistinct and ill-defined ideas of the nature and characteristics of the great virtues which the Christian is bound to practise, or of the vices which he is bound to avoid; and, on this very account, they are placed, as it were, in the impossibility of acquiring the one or of avoiding the other; for how can a man either practise in all its perfection, or avoid in all its nicety, that of which he is more or less in ignorance?

In commencing, therefore, an instruction on any virtue or vice, it is of the first importance to define and explain it clearly, and with the utmost precision. We may employ, for this purpose, either the definition strictly so called, or the rhetorical definition, which is rather a description than a strict definition. The strict definition explains the nature of any subject, by

means of the *Genus proximum* and the *Differentia propria maxima.* Thus, Humility might be defined to be "The virtue by which a man becomes, from an intimate knowledge of himself, vile in his own eyes;" and this definition would be amply sufficient for an educated and attentive audience. But, with an audience either not so well instructed, or less attentive, we must employ the rhetorical definition, which is rather a clear and forcible description of any subject, through its characteristic qualities, marks, and effects, than a definition.

After having thus clearly defined and explained the nature of our subject, we must proceed to develop the various points of view from which it may be regarded; to distinguish between its species and the degrees in which it may be practised. For example: if engaged in explaining the virtue of contrition, we may distinguish the perfect contrition which arises from the pure love of God, and the imperfect contrition, or attrition, which is founded on lower motives; and so of all the other virtues or vices.

But we cannot rest here. Men are so apt to deceive themselves, and to persuade themselves they are practising virtues of which, in truth, perhaps, they do not possess the first beginnings; or that they are exempt from vices which are palpable to every eye save their own; that we must proceed further still, and by joining to our definition a lively description of the *characteristics*, the *marks*, and the *effects* of the virtue or vice of which we speak, bring it home to our hearers with a clearness and vivid reality which they can no longer

hope to escape. By this means they will learn to know themselves—the last knowledge which a man ordinarily acquires. Thus, we may explain *charity* by its *characteristics* as laid down by St. Paul: or *obedience*, as described by St. Bonaventure: *Prompta sine dilatione, voluntaria sine contradictione, strenua sine pusillanimitate, universalis sine exceptione:* or we may develop the vice of *pride* by a description of its *marks*, viz., complacency in oneself and one's own petty advantages; that over-weening good opinion of ourselves which makes us so ready to play the critic and to turn others into ridicule; which renders us so obstinately attached to our own ideas, and so impatient of the views of others; which fills us with a presumption that makes us ready to undertake any duty or any office, no matter how high or how onerous it may be; which, in a word, causes us to seek ourselves and our own glorification in all our thoughts, words, and undertakings; and we may most powerfully heighten the force of our description by adding to the *marks*, the consideration of the *effects* which flow from the practice of any virtue or vice. Thus, for example, we may illustrate our definition of Christian charity by a description of its effects, viz., its solicitude to speak evil of no man, but to think well of all, and to do good to all; to be kind, amiable, and obliging in every relation of life, &c., &c.

Such, briefly, are some of the principal means of explaining to an audience the nature of any virtue or vice.

SECTION III.

Motives for Embracing Virtue, or Avoiding Vice.

It is not enough to explain to our hearers the nature of any virtue or vice. We must now proceed to the next step, which is to urge upon them, with all the force at our command, the motives which should influence them to embrace the one, and avoid the other. Motives may be reduced to four: Necessity, or Obligation; Advantage; Pleasure or Self-approbation; Facility:

I. *Necessity, or Obligation.* The necessity or obligation of embracing any virtue, or avoiding any vice, may be shown from the natural law; from the divine law, old or new; from the civil or ecclesiastical positive law; or, from the deplorable consequences which inevitably attend the absence of the virtue, or the presence of the vice, of which we speak, &c., &c.

II. *Advantage.* It is easy to show the advantages which attend the practice of virtue, and the avoiding of vice. By the practice of virtue we escape not only the greatest evils of the world to come, but even many sufferings of this life. Virtue procures us the friendship of God, draws down His benefits upon us, and guarantees us the glory of the future yet to be revealed. On the other hand, vice is ever accompanied by a train of most deplorable consequences. It heaps pain, disgrace, and bodily suffering upon its unhappy victims. Sooner or later, it entails misery and wretchedness upon a man in this

world; and depriving him of the graces, and drawing down upon him the just indignation of God, it robs him for ever of those eternal hopes, the attainment of which is his only business on earth.

III. *Pleasure.* The only real pleasure to be found on earth is in the practice of virtue. Virtue carries with it a solid pleasure which surpasses all the mere gratifications of sense. It banishes far from the soul all trouble, inquietude, and remorse of conscience, filling it with a peace which passeth all understanding; it sweetens the afflictions which are inevitable in this vale of tears: *Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione.* On the contrary, who is so really wretched as the vicious man? What annoyance, what disquiet, what chagrin and bitter disappointment, what remorse of conscience, what shrinking from the dread to come, has possession of his heart! *Tribulatio et angustia in omnem animam hominis operantis malum.* To this same head may be referred the solid pleasure which the virtuous man finds in the approbation of his conscience, and in the intimate conviction which he feels that a virtuous life is the only one conformable to right reason; as a life of vice is one of degradation and infamous slavery, which draws down upon its victim the indignation of God, and the contempt of his fellow-men.

IV. *Facility.* It is a great encouragement to men to practise virtue, or to avoid vice, when we show them that this is very easy; and there is scarcely any delusion more deeply founded than that belief which is so commonly entertained by men that the practice

of virtue is something very difficult to flesh and blood.

It is very easy to prove that the practice of virtue is not difficult, but quite the contrary. We may show this (*a*) From the goodness of God, who is ever ready with his abundant grace to assist his children; (*b*) From His Justice, since He cannot command us to do anything without at the same time supplying us with abundant means of carring out His wishes; (*c*) From the examples of the saints, who have practised this virtue, or avoided this vice, in much more trying circumstances than those in which we are placed — *Quod isti et istæ, cur non ego?* (*d*) From the words of our Lord Himself, who has said: *Jugam meum suave est, et onus meum leve;* and finally (*e*) From the teaching of the word of God: *Mundata ejus gravia non sunt.*

These and other motives to practise virtue and avoid vice are to be found in the 7th chap. of the Book of Wisdom, and in many other places of Holy Writ. They are also developed with singular beauty and excellency in P. Grenade's admirable *Guide des Pécheurs.*

SECTION IV.

Means of Acquiring Virtue, or Correcting Vice.

The preacher will have done much in explaining the nature of any virtue or vice, and the motives which should impel us to practise the one and avoid the other.

But, all this will be useless, or at least, less efficacious, unless he also prescribe the means of doing so; and hence, in every instruction such as we are now considering, the indication of the means to be adopted for the gaining of the desired end will necessarily hold a very prominent place.

Means, it is needless to remark, are either general or particular. General means, that is, means equally useful for the acquisition of any virtue, or the extirpation of any vice, are prayer, the frequentation of the sacraments, pious reading, examination of conscience, flight of dangerous occasions, careful avoiding of evil companions, great sternness of thought and habitual resolution in banishing the first whisperings of concupiscence, the spirit of self-denial, so little understood and yet so rigorously insisted upon by our Divine Lord as an essential condition, *conditio sine qua non*, of the Christian life, the frequent and serious meditation of the examples of the saints and of the King of the saints, the pressing motives which we have to be virtuous, and in fine, a prompt and generous co-operation with our graces. And here, perhaps, we may be allowed to remark, that there is scarcely any matter in the spiritual life more important, and less understood, than the management of our graces. The spiritual life of, alas, but too many of us, is made up of broken promises to God, and of graces, if not actually despised, at least thrown away and squandered; and, amongst the general means of advancing in virtue, or of recovering from vice, which it will be the pastor's duty to suggest, there is probably no one which requires such delicate

treatment, such strenuous advocacy, and such judicious consideration, as this management of the graces with which our spiritual life is surrounded, and of which it is made up.

Particular means, that is means especially adapted for the acquiring of any special virtue, or the correction of any particular vice, or for the different and changing circumstances in which a person may find himself, will, of course, vary according to those circumstances, and can only be indicated by the prudent and zealous pastor of souls. Thus, the particular means which one person may have to take, in his conflict with sensuality, may be the mortification of his senses; whilst another may have to guard against light reading or unrestrained affections. Almsgiving is a particular remedy for avarice, and the practice of humility for the spirit of pride, &c. &c. The further development and practical application of these ideas must evidently be left to the zeal and experience of the preacher, and the directing influence of those circumstances which are ever varying.

SECTION V.

Method of Arranging an Instruction on any Virtue or Vice.

Having studied the nature, qualities, and characteristics of any virtue or vice, the motives which may influence us to practise the one and avoid the other, and the means to be employed, it only remains to

consider briefly the plan or method according to which our instruction may be most usefully arranged.

Whilst each one will follow his own discretion to a great extent, and wisely leave himself considerable latitude in a matter so eminently practical as this, the young preacher will probably find that, as a general rule, he will not be able to select a more simple, and, at the same time, more useful method of dividing his instruction, than according to the order which we have indicated in the foregoing sections. If he elect to follow this order, his instruction will be thus arranged:

First Point. Nature, qualities, characteristics, of any virtue or vice.

Second Point. Motives for embracing the virtue, or avoiding the vice.

Third Point. Means of acquiring any virtue, or of correcting any vice.

It is evident that the preacher could have no better division than the above in the supposition that he exhausts the consideration of any virtue or vice in one discourse.

But we have insinuated that the preacher may find it advisable, or even necessary, to devote several discourses to the consideration of some particular virtue or vice, and it is plain that there are some of the commandments at least, which he could not possibly conclude in one instruction. Let us take the first as an instance. How could any preacher, no matter how exact his knowledge, or how great his powers of compression and arrangement, hope to exhaust in one instruction, all the virtues and vices the consideration

of which naturally falls under the head of the First Commandment? It would be simply impossible.

It will, then, frequently be necessary to devote several instructions to some particular virtue or vice; and, in this case, it will probably be found useful to adopt an arrangement somewhat different from the one which we have just indicated. Instead of dividing the discourse into three heads or points, I. Nature, II. Motives, III. Means—we may take each of these heads or points as a discourse in itself; and, thus, we may give one instruction on the nature of any virtue or vice; a second, on the motives; and a third, on the means to be employed for acquiring the one or avoiding the other.

It is very easy to develop any subject from this second point of view, and all the principles already laid down will, *mutatis mutandis*, be equally useful in this case. Thus, ex. g., if we desired to make the virtue of contrition form the subject of three distinct instructions, we could do so both with ease and profit. In the first discourse we could consider the nature of contrition, as explained by the five qualities which it must necessarily possess. In the second, the motives which should move us to sorrow for our sins. In the third, the means which we are to employ in order to secure this salutary sorrow.

Another general and very simple manner of arranging an instruction on any virtue, would be to divide it into two points which might be thus apportioned:

First Point. The Importance of this virtue.

Second Point. The means of acquiring it.

In this point of view it is evident, however, that it would be necessary to treat, *modo accessorio*, several matters which are not naturally included under the division, but which cannot be passed over without notice.

By the employment of one or other of these methods, we may treat, with the greatest ease, not only the virtues and the vices in general, but all those obligations of the Christian life which are founded upon, or flow from, the Commandments of God and of His Church. It may not be out of place here briefly to refer to two of the Commandments which present special difficulties to the pastor, more particularly if he be young and inexperienced. There are occasions on which it is impossible to pass the Sixth and Ninth Commandments without some notice; but, conceding this, we must add, that the pastor—no matter how advanced in years, how prudent or how circumspect he may be—will never approach these delicate subjects without great fear and trembling, lest he should, on the one hand, forget what is due to the sanctity of his character, and to the purity of those lips which are daily purpled by the priceless blood of the Lamb without spot; or, on the other, sully, even by an indiscreet word, the conscience of a single individual who may be listening to him; and how difficult it is, so to measure our words that, whilst we speak the plain, unvarnished truth with all the freedom of the Gospel, we give offence to no one, and sully the conscience of no one, in a congregation composed, perhaps, of all ages, of

both sexes, and of all ranks in life, can be more easily imagined than described.

Before essaying to treat these delicate subjects, the zealous pastor will not fail to implore God to purify his lips, even as the lips of the Prophet were purified by the coals of living fire. He will speak with such gravity of voice, and with such an air of serious, even stern, self-possession, as will impress his hearers with sentiments of modesty and holy reserve. He may treat this subject from a twofold point of view: that is, he may treat either the virtue of purity, or the contrary vice, with the motives and the means for practising the one, or of avoiding the other. The first method is less dangerous, and better becomes a young priest. Much experience, and many grey hairs, are necessary to render at once effective and innocuous the words of him who makes a bold and open attack upon the vice of impurity and its numerous offspring.

In developing the motives which should influence his hearers to practise the virtue of purity, the preacher should do his utmost to proclaim the beauty and the excellence of that angelic virtue, which raises man above himself—which enables him to lead an angelic life, even whilst encompassed with this body of death—which draws down upon him the abundance of God's grace whilst here below, and the abundance of His glory hereafter. He will dwell upon those powerful examples which are furnished by St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaus, and so many others—examples which are of infinite value to the preacher, and which, when properly employed, produce a wonderful effect, since

example is always more efficacious than mere precept.

In developing the motives for avoiding the vice of impurity, M. Hamon[1] recommends the preacher to confine himself to two: its effects and its chastisements. Its *effects* are most hideous. Impurity degrades a man, and renders him contemptible, even in his own eyes; it robs his heart of every feeling of manliness and honor; it profanes that body, which is a member of Jesus Christ, and a temple of the Holy Ghost; it fills him with disgust for all those duties which he owes to God, his neighbour, and himself; it brings death to that charity which it replaces by a cruel and selfish egotism—to that hope for which it substitutes a cold and shallow unbelief—and to that faith whose pure teachings are not to be reconciled with the foul promptings and aspirations of the heart which is given up to the demon of uncleanness: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus.*

Its *chastisements* are most terrible. There is scarcely any vice which God holds in more supreme horror and disgust. It is the vice for whose punishment the whole world, save Noah and his just family, was drowned in the avenging waters of the deluge: *Quia caro est:* and which drew down fire from heaven upon the unhappy dwellers in the plains. It is this vice which blasts the fondest hopes of so many parents, and sends so many gray heads down in sorrow to the grave. To this vice, in a word, may be referred a prin-

[1] *Traite de la Prédication.*

cipal share of those calamities, public and private, which have afflicted the human race from the days of Adam even to our own time.

In indicating the means to be adopted in order to guard against, or to conquer, this vice, the preacher will, in addition to those at which we have already glanced, dwell upon the imperative necessity of avoiding dangerous occasions, and more especially those which are found in the reading of bad books, and in the society of those who are not fit companions for Christian youths and maidens. The great majority of those who fall victims to this vice, and thus lose themselves body and soul, incur this penalty, not so much, perhaps, through positive malice, at least in the beginning, as through heedlessly exposing themselves to those dangerous occasions, which, sooner or later, draw destruction in their train; and the zealous pastor of souls will never be weary of pointing out to the young and unwary these occasions, and of exhorting the dear children, whom he has brought forth in the Gospel, to fly, as from the trail of the serpent, those first beginnings of evil—those allurements to sin, whatever they may be, with which no one can trifle in vain, and with which no man dallies except at the peril of his virtue and of his soul's salvation.

He who desires to consult illustrious models on this matter, will find in the sermon of Bourdaloue on Impurity, and in that of Massillon on the Prodigal Son, two admirable examples of the manner in which the freedom of the Gospel may be combined with the require-

ments, not only of Christian prudence, but also of Christian reserve and delicacy of speech.

The treatise of Rodriguez on the Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection, the works of St. Francis of Sales, Louis of Grenada, and Pere Saint-Jure, will be found replete with all that is most excellent, and practically useful, on the Virtues and the Vices

CHAPTER V.

A COURSE OF INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SACRAMENTS.

SECTION I.

General Idea of the Nature of this Course.

THE Sacraments, their nature and excellence, the dispositions which they require, the obligations which they impose, and the special graces which they bring to man, will form the natural and necessary matter of another of those series of instructions with which the zealous pastor of souls will seek to feed his people, and to instil into them that knowledge which maketh wise unto life everlasting.

It would be mere loss of time to pretend to prove the utility and the necessity of a course of instructions which will have the sacraments for its subject.

The young pastor, however, will do well to study that part of the Catechism of the Council of Trent in which he is reminded of his obligations in this regard, and of the means of discharging them.[1]

As we have already developed at sufficient length the general principles which equally regard every

[1] Part II. chap. i. quaes. i.

course of instructions, no matter what the precise nature of such course may be, and as the sacraments are treated in great detail in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, to which we have so frequently referred, we shall be able to dismiss this subject very briefly. We, therefore, merely propose to throw out a few leading ideas which may regard the treatment of the sacraments from a general point of view. We refer the young preacher to the Catechism just mentioned, for all that regards the sacraments in detail; the nature, excellence, and special graces attached to each one in particular; the manner in which he is to explain to the people the preparation which it demands at their hands, and the obligations which it imposes upon them. In that work he will find all these points treated with the utmost clearness, perspicuity, and practical amplification.

SECTION II.

The Nature and Excellence of the Sacraments.

Whilst the preacher will not reserve to himself less liberty in treating the sacraments than we recommended him to employ in the consideration of the Commandments; and whilst there are some of the sacraments which he can perhaps treat at sufficient length in one discourse; as there are others, penance, for instance, upon which several may not only be profitably employed but may be absolutely necessary;

his instructions on this subject will, most probably as a general rule, resolve themselves into some such form as the following:

First Point. The excellence of the sacrament.

Second Point. The dispositions which it requires in the receiver.

Third Point. The obligations which it imposes upon him.

The Excellence of the Sacrament. After briefly introducing his subject, the preacher will at once, as an ordinary rule, proceed to establish the excellence of the sacrament which forms the matter of the instruction; and, under the general head of its excellence, is usually included whatever is to be said of the special necessity of receiving it, or the advantages which flow from its reception.

It is very easy to establish the excellence and grandeur of the sacraments. They are of Divine institution, coming to us from heaven, and having our Lord for their author. They are the channels by which the priceless blood of Christ is conveyed to us, and grace is caused to flow down upon our souls. The manner of their operation is such as to fill the devout soul with reverent wonder and admiration; since, by the application of the most simple elements, a drop of water, the uttering of a few words, the soul which does not place an obstacle to the infusion of grace, is purified from all its stains, no matter how numerous or how hideous they may be. By the action of the sacramental words the slave of hell is transformed into a friend of God; is clad in the robe of sanctifying grace; and becomes at once

an object pleasing to God and to His holy angels. The soul that was already just becomes still more so: *Qui justus est, justificetur adhuc:* and acquires new degrees of grace here, and the claim to a higher degree of glory hereafter. Then, besides the priceless grace which is common to them all, each sacrament brings with it its own special benediction, some of them, moreover, imprinting upon the soul of the receiver a character which he shall carry with him to the throne of God, and which shall be one of the brightest jewels in the diadem of glory that has been set aside for him who is faithful. Is it not evident that no created tongue, not even that of seraph, can ever declare the millionth degree of the excellence of the Adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist? Is it not evident that the tongue of the zealous pastor can never be at a loss for words with which to proclaim the excellence of those sacraments which show forth, in such an infinite measure and degree, the bounty, the mercy, and the goodness of God, which thus supplies us with an easy means of washing away the stains of our sinful souls, and which thus pours upon us in such loving abundance the treasures of His grace.

The preacher may establish the *necessity* of receiving the sacraments in various ways. A sacrament may be necessary, *necessitate medii*, as baptism, or, under certain conditions, the sacrament of penance; *necessitate præcepti*, as the Easter Communion, &c. &c.; or, *necessitate accidentali*, as in those cases where the reception of the sacrament is the surest, and, perhaps, the only means left us, to overcome our bad habits, and advance

ourselves in the way of God's service. From these sources, as occasion may offer and prudence suggest, the preacher will easily establish the necessity of receiving the sacraments.

To these reflections on the excellency and necessity of the sacraments, we may most profitably add some on the advantages which flow to the soul from the worthy use of these channels of grace. In one of his discourses, Bourdaloue bitterly deplores the fact that preachers take so little pains to fill their hearers with an intimate and lively conviction of the inestimable advantages which come to them by means of the sacraments. Modern preachers are, perhaps, scarcely less in fault than those of Bourdaloue's time, and if so many of our people have but little esteem of the holy sacraments, or but a slight and very imperfect appreciation of the advantages of which they are the channels, how much of this may not, perhaps, have to be referred to us? We should, then, labour most earnestly to inspire our hearers with a lively idea of the great advantages which come to them through the worthy and frequent reception of the sacraments.

These special *advantages* may be reduced to the two great heads of sanctifying grace, and sacramental grace.

The preacher may inspire his flock with an elevated idea of the advantages of sanctifyin g grace by dwelling in the first place, upon the excellence of this grace in itself. It is a supernatural gift of God which makes us sharers, in a certain sense, in His own infinite sanctity: it is our title deed to the kingdom of Heaven, since God can refuse nothing to that claim which has been

purchased by, and rests upon, the priceless blood of Jesus Christ. Then, he may show that sanctifying grace is the source and foundation of all our merit. The most heroic actions have no claim to supernatural reward unless they be animated by it. On the other hand, the meanest and most indifferent actions of our daily life, when performed in union with God, and enlivened by the presence of sanctifying grace, become meritorious of that infinite reward which is laid up in the kingdom of God for His faithful children. And this, too, is a point on which the preacher should never grow weary of dilating, since there is no matter which is more overlooked in the spiritual life than that the slightest of our daily actions can and ought to be rendered meritorious of supernatural reward, and that sanctification and perfection are precisely placed, at least for the most of us, in these little things which we so despise and throw away. Finally, he may dwell in glowing words upon the infinite happiness of the soul which has been reconciled to God through the means of the holy sacraments; and upon the peace, the joy and the calm delights which the just conscience ever finds in such abundance in these sources of grace and of benediction.

The preacher may, no less easily and effectually, establish the advantages to be found in sacramental grace. He will draw the attention of his hearers to the admirable ingenuity with which the love of God adapts the special grace of each sacrament to some great special need of man's nature, or to some one of the great obligations which are imposed upon him by

the Christian life. Thus, if by baptism a man contracts the obligation of living a Christian life, he receives at the same the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and a right to all those graces which he may hereafter require in order to live in a Christian manner. Thus, penance furnishes us with special aids to overcome our weakness, and guard against the dangers of relapse; and the Blessed Eucharist perfects and finishes the good work which was begun by the sacrament of penance. And, so of the other sacraments. Is it not evident once more that the zealous preacher can never be at a loss for reflections, as fruitful as they will be interesting, and well adapted to inspire his hearers with an intimate appreciation of the excellency of the sacraments in themselves, and the infinite advantages to be found in their worthy reception?

SECTION III.

Dispositions required in the Worthy Recipient of the Sacraments.

After having thoroughly explained the nature, excellency, and advantages of the sacraments, the preacher will now proceed to enforce the necessity of approaching to their reception with the proper dispositions.

Without entering at any great length into this point we may remark briefly, that he will naturally dwell, in the first place, upon the great importance of approaching the sacraments with the proper dispositions; and,

secondly, he will carefully explain in what this necessary preparation consists.

The preacher will establish the first point by showing that he who presumes to draw near to the holy sacraments unworthily, is guilty of a sacrilege, and that he thus poisons the stream of grace at its very fountain-head; that the measure of the graces we receive will be according to the measure of our dispositions; and that he who approaches negligently, or with but little preparation, deprives himself of some portion of the graces of the sacrament.

He will explain, with the greatest diligence and exactness, in what precisely this necessary preparation consists; the remote and the proximate preparation; the dispositions which are absolutely necessary, and those which aid to the more worthy and fruitful reception of the sacraments. He will show in what each particular disposition consists; the means of acquiring it; the defects which place an absolute barrier to the effects of any sacrament; and those which render it less fruitful. The diligent development of these ideas will leave him little to add on this matter of the dispositions required in the recipient.

SECTION IV.

Obligations which the Sacraments impose upon those who receive them.

Finally, the preacher should spare no pains to impress upon his hearers the great truth, that they, on their part, contract very real and very serious obliga-

tions in the reception of the sacraments. In these matters the obligation is correlative and co-existent. If God bestows His graces upon us, He will demand a rigorous account of them at our hands. If He gives us graces which are, of their nature, fruitful in an infinite measure, it is not that we may leave them to wither and die through our culpable neglect. In the matter of our graces, more than in any other affair, will God require the last farthing of us; and this is a truth which the preacher should lose no opportunity of bringing practically before his people.

Each sacrament brings along with its reception some peculiar obligation, which the preacher will, *tempore opportuno*, sedulously explain and enforce. In addition to this special one, there are certain general obligations upon which he will no less perseveringly insist. The first of these is an ardent gratitude for the great grace received. The second is a vigilant watchfulness to conserve it, and so to guard every avenue to our heart, that its effects may not be diminished or swept away by levity or sin. The third is a never-tiring diligence in doing our utmost to cause this blessed grace to fructify in our souls, and to bring forth that precise fruit which God attaches to its reception, and which He expects it to produce. And the fourth is the obligation of labouring to discharge, ever more and more perfectly, the duties of the state in which we are placed by God, and to aid us in discharging which He gives us the graces of His holy sacraments, as the most powerful assistance which even He can bestow upon us.

Such are the leading ideas, and such the substantial order, which the preacher will probably employ in his ordinary instructions on the sacraments. Sometimes, as we have already said, he may be able to exhaust his subject in one discourse; and, in this case, the above is the order which he is pretty sure to follow, more or less exactly. If he wish to deliver several instructions upon the same sacrament, he will have no difficulty in arranging his matter, and the general ideas thrown out above will be scarcely less useful to him when treating his subject from this latter point of view. Thus, to take one of the most ready examples: A preacher may easily deliver a course of six instructions on the sacrament of penance. The first might treat of the Divine precept of confession: the advantages of a good and the terrible crime of a bad confession. The second might treat of the examination of conscience; its importance, and the method of making it. The third, contrition; its necessity, conditions, and motives. The fourth, the resolution of amendment; its necessity, characteristics, and marks. The fifth, confession; its qualities, and how it is to be made. And the sixth might speak of sacramental penance; its obligation and the spirit and manner in which it is to be discharged. In the same way we might take the sacrament of the Eucharist, with pleasure and profit to our hearers. And, whichever method we may adopt, the Catechism of the Council of Trent will be found equally useful in our preparation, and equally invaluable as the authorised exponent of the Church's teaching on these all-important points.

CHAPTER VI.

A COURSE OF INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER.

SECTION I.

General Principles of such a Course.

PRAYER being at once an act of that homage and adoration which every man is bound to render to his Creator, and the most efficacious means of obtaining those graces and aids which are necessary for his spiritual and temporal prosperity, the zealous pastor of souls will use his utmost diligence, not only to convince his people of the necessity of prayer, but also to teach them how to pray, in such a manner, and with such dispositions, as may most effectually conduce to this twofold end.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent warns the pastor that, amongst his obligations, the duty of instructing his flock thoroughly on the nature, motives, and conditions of acceptable prayer, is of primary necessity.

Influenced as well by this admonition, as by his own zeal, and his knowledge of the necessities of his flock in this regard, the pastor will not content himself with giving a disconnected discourse, from time to time, on

the general subject of Prayer; but he will make this subject, and its due development, the matter of a course of instructions to be delivered to his people, in conformity with the teaching of the Council of Trent.

The Council, understanding well the needs of the faithful in this respect, and that but too many have little or no comprehension of the prayers which they recite, so that their worship becomes a mere mechanical act without spirit or truth, enjoins upon pastors the necessity and obligation of descending into particulars on this point, and of instructing their people thoroughly on this whole matter of Prayer. It enjoins not only general instructions, but particular ones; and in order to leave the pastor no excuse, either of ignorance, or of want of matter, or of the method to be followed in his discourses, the Catechism of the Council treats the subject of Prayer in seventeen chapters, replete with all that can tend to edify and instruct. The first eight chapters treat of Prayer and its paramount necessity: Its utility; Its parts and degrees; Its objects; For whom we should pray; On the preparation for prayer; On the manner of praying. And, as the Lord's Prayer is the most sublime of all others, the model of all prayers, and the form of petition most frequently to be on the lips of the Christian, the remaining nine chapters are devoted to the explanation of this prayer, and of the various petitions of which it is composed.

From all this, it is evident that the instructions to be given by a pastor to his flock on this point may be twofold. They may regard Prayer in general; and they may regard particular forms; as, for example, the

Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Theological Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, &c. &c. It is evident, too, that neither our space will permit, nor does necessity require us to enter into the consideration of, or to lay down, rules by which every course of instructions on particular forms of prayer is to be governed and directed. Such particular instructions will be found in the Catechism of the Council, and other like works, developed and explained with a minuteness and learning to which we cannot pretend to aspire. It will be sufficient for us to lay down briefly three or four essential conditions, to be borne in mind when explaining to the faithful any of those ordinary prayers which they are accustomed to use, and which there is so much danger of their reciting in a merely mechanical manner, without understanding, appreciation, or devotional feeling.

In treating, then, of particular prayers, we should most carefully, in the first place, explain the meaning and sense of each word of such prayers, so that our hearers, even the most simple amongst them, may be no longer in any ignorance of their full and entire signification. We should, secondly, spare no pains to bring out, in the most striking manner, the excellency and the beauty of the prayer of which we are speaking. Thirdly, we should indicate and insist upon the pious sentiments, and the devout affections, which should necessarily accompany and give its true value to the mere vocal recitation of the prayers. And, lastly, we should repeat our explanations, over and over again, until we can be morally certain that all our hearers thoroughly possess, not only the words of the

prayer which we seek to explain, but also their meaning and full signification. When we can be certain of this, we may also be certain that they are in a position to comply with the Divine precept—to pray in spirit and in truth.

With these brief remarks on particular prayers we shall now proceed to throw out some general principles which will probably be found useful in the consideration of this subject from a general point of view, the only one which fairly falls within the scope of the present work.

SECTION II.

Method of Preparing and Arranging an Instruction on Prayer—Motives of Prayer.

Whatever be the form which our instruction on prayer may take, there are some leading ideas which are pretty certain to stand out in prominent relief, and which we now propose to consider; or, in other words, every ordinary discourse on this subject is almost sure to take the following form :—

First Point. The motives which should lead us to pray.

Second Point. The things which we should ask in prayer.

Third Point. The conditions or qualities of acceptable prayer. And we shall now say a few words on each of these points.

The motives which should induce every Christian man to be instant in prayer, may be briefly reduced to three: its necessity, its efficacy, and its consolations.

Its necessity. The necessity of prayer may be established from four great leading points of view. The first of these is the natural obligation imposed upon every man of adoring, thanking, and praising his Creator, and imploring pardon of his daily sins. The second is the positive law of Jesus Christ binding men to pray. The third is the impossibility of fulfilling precepts, of overcoming temptations, of performing acts worthy of supernatural reward; in one word, the impossibility of securing our salvation without grace, which, in the ordinary providence of God, is only granted to prayer. And the fourth is the obligation we are under of asking for all these blessings, spiritual and temporal, which we need, not only for ourselves, but which we are also bound to ask for our parents, our friends, the church, society in general, &c. &c. From any one of, or from all, these points of view, the pastor can have no difficulty in deducing powerful arguments to show the necessity of prayer.

Its efficacy. Even if there were not an absolute obligation to pray, the efficacy which is promised to this holy exercise should be motive enough to incite us to discharge this duty with all possible fervour and exactness. If an earthly monarch had made a solemn promise to grant his subjects all their reasonable requests on the sole condition of their asking for them, there would be little necessity to remind them of this condition, or to exhort them to reduce it to practice.

And yet, this is precisely what God has done. These promises are reiterated again and again in Holy Writ. They are fortified with the sanction of an oath: *Amen, amen, dico vobis.*[1] They embrace all that we can reasonably desire: *Quodcumque volueritis petetis et fiet vobis.*[2] They regard all without distinction, rich and poor, the lowly and the great: *Principis aures paucis patent, Dei vero omnibus volentibus*, says St. John Chrysostom. They do not exclude even the greatest sinners, as is proved by the history of the publican in the temple, an example of divine charity which caused St. Paul to exclaim: *Dives in omnes qui invocant illum.*[3] God has pledged His divine word that prayer shall carry the kingdom of heaven by violence: *Oratio vim Deo infert.*[4] From these or similar arguments, the pastor may readily establish the infinite efficacy of prayer. Whilst, however, he thus labours to animate his flock with the greatest confidence in the efficacy of prayer, let him also warn them against the delusion into which many fall, and through which they, perhaps, even give up the practice of prayer, viz., that God is not faithful to His promises because He does not always grant our requests at the very instant they are made. Let him explain that there may be many reasons why God should thus delay to grant, or, even altogether deny our requests. Sometimes we pray without the necessary conditions. Sometimes we ask what would be hurtful for us. Sometimes, whilst intending to grant our petitions, [illegible] that it will be more advantageous to

[1] Joann. xvi. 23. *et seq.*
[2] Joann. xv. 7.
[3] Rom. x. 12.
[4] S. Joann. Clim.

us to defer his favours for a little while, that thus we may conceive a greater desire of them; that thus we may pray for them with redoubled fervour and earnestness. Let the zealous pastor explain these matters assiduously to his people, with a firm conviction that these things are but little understood and less appreciated; and doing this, let him not doubt but that, in the end, he will inspire his flock with a salutary estimation of the necessity and efficacy of prayer.

Its consolations. Finally, the consolations to be found in prayer are one of the most powerful motives to move us to its practice. Experience amply proves that it is in prayer the troubled soul finds its consolations and the fervent soul its purest pleasures; that it is in prayer the Christian looks for, and most surely discovers, the means of calming every passion and of tasting to the full the sweets of virtue and the placid happiness of an innocent and holy life. And whilst developing these or similar ideas, the pastor will do well not to overlook the subject of ejaculatory prayers, the practice of which is one of the most efficacious means of keeping the soul bound in constant union with God, and of drawing down upon herself the choicest graces from on high.

SECTION III.

The Things to be demanded in Prayer.

After having thus instructed his people on the motives which should move them to pray continually and earnestly, the pastor will, by a natural transition,

pass to the consideration of those matters which they should ask in prayer. And, here again, abstracting from particular considerations and particular petitions, which must be explained by the pastor in accordance with the special position in which he may find himself placed, and the special wants of those to whom he ministers, we may briefly lay down the following general rules on this point.

The people are to be taught that they may and ought to pray for :

I. Everything that is necessary or useful for the welfare of the soul.

II. Deliverance from temporal evils, in so far as such immunity may better conduce to spiritual interests.

III. All those temporal blessings of which they stand in need, or which may be necessary for the becoming discharge of the duties of the position of life in which Providence may have placed them.

IV. All those graces and blessings, spiritual and temporal, which are necessary or useful for our neighbour, for society in general, and for the Church of God and its supreme head upon earth.

V. All that will help to advance the glory of God and the propagation of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

SECTION IV.

The Conditions or Qualities of Acceptable Prayer.

As the principal reason why so many of our prayers remain unheard is the fact that we do not ask as we

ought, the pastor, having duly developed the two preceding points, will finally proceed to explain and dwell upon the necessity of those conditions or qualities the presence of which can alone render prayer acceptable to the Almighty. "The manner in which we make use of holy prayer," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "is matter of the highest moment; for, although prayer is a good and salutary thing, yet, unless it be duly applied, it is of no avail; for we often, as St. James says, receive not what we ask because we ask amiss. Parish priests, therefore, will teach the faithful people what is the best manner of praying well, and of performing both private and public prayer. These rules of Christian prayer have been handed down from the discipline of Christ the Lord."

In conformity with this teaching the pastor will, then, carefully explain the necessity of praying with the proper dispositions, and he will no less diligently explain the precise nature of these conditions or qualities. In a general way, they may be included under the following heads:

I. Respect, interior and exterior, for the majesty of God. This respect will manifest itself in the position which he who prays will assume, and in his attention to the sense of the words which he employs, and the pious affections which they suggest.

II. Profound humility, arising from an intimate conviction of our own unworthiness, and of the infinite dignity of Him to whom we speak.

III. Unbounded confidence in the Divine mercy, and in the promises made to those who pray as they ought.

IV. A great and persevering desire to be heard.

V. Unflagging perseverance in our prayer.

If the pastor, according to his lights, and in the prudent and zealous discharge of his duty, develop these ideas from time to time; and, not content with those general instructions on prayer to which our remarks have necessarily more immediate reference, also devote himself assiduously to the explanation of the particular ones which his flock are accustomed to employ, as the Lord's Prayer, &c. &c.; he need not doubt but that he will inspire his people with that salutary conviction of the necessity of praying, and of praying well, which will make them a people according to God's own heart; a people powerful in word and in work; a people who will be blessed with the abundance of every heavenly benediction, and who will be thus blessed because they will know where to look for the graces which they require, as they will know the time in which, and the manner how, to demand those favours which can come from the hand of God alone, and which are bestowed by that Divine hand only in answer to humble, earnest, confident, and persevering prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.

SECTION I.

The Strict Obligation of Catechetical Instruction, as shown by the Teaching of the Council of Trent, of Benedict XIV., and the most eminent Theologians—Natural Obligation from the Office of Pastor—Opinions of St. Francis Xavier and St. Francis de Sales.

THE course of this investigation into the nature and qualities of popular preaching, now leads us to the consideration of a subject which, whilst it is, perhaps, held in lower estimation than any other by many pastors, is, without doubt, at once the most interesting and the most important which can engage the attention, and enlist the warmest sympathies, of the true minister of the Gospel. "*Sinite parvulos venire ad me, et ne prohibueritis eos,*" said Jesus Christ, the true Pastor of pastors; "*et complexans eos, et manus imponens super illos, benedicebat eos.*" And, meditating on these touching words the pious Gerson cries out: "O piissime Jesu, quis ultra post te verecundabitur esse humilis ad parvulos? Quis elatus de sua magnitudine vel scientiâ, parvitatem parvulorum, ignorantiam vel imbecillitatem

audebit aspernari, quando, tu qui es Deus benedictus in sæcula, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi, usque ad castissimos parvulorum amplexus beata brachia mansuetus inclinas et circumligas! . . . . eos sapientiæ verbis exhortabor, ut si quis parvulus est veniat ad me."

Realizing, as she alone can realize them, the teaching and the example of her Divine Spouse, and inflamed with that zeal for the salvation of souls, which is one of her most special and most highly cherished prerogatives, the Church of God has never relaxed her efforts, that the young ones of her flock, the lambs of her fold, should be trained up, from their earliest days, in the love and service of God. Hence, when the Council of Trent, sess. xxiv. chap. iv., imposes upon all bishops the most rigorous obligation of seeing that the Catechism is duly taught in their respective dioceses, it does not give expression to anything new, but merely reduces to a more explicit form and shape what had ever been the scope and spirit of the Church's teaching: "Episcopi, saltem dominicis et aliis festivis diebus, pueros, in singulis parochiis fidei rudimenta diligenter ab iis ad quos spectabit doceri curabunt . . . . . et si opus sit, etiam per censuras ecclesiasticas compellent."—Sess. xxiv. cap. iv. *De Reform.* In three Encyclical Letters, which bear date Febuary 7, 1742; October 29, 1744; and June 26, 1754, Benedict XIV. impresses upon all bishops the obligation of attending to this subject with the utmost vigilance. He proves that there are, always and everywhere, vast numbers of unfortunate Christians plunged in deplorable and utter ignorance. He then reminds

the bishops that they are rigorously bound to take all possible means to secure for their diocesans a sufficient knowledge of the truths of religion. He asserts that the law of the Council of Trent, regarding catechetical instruction, is conceived in general terms; and, therefore, he condemns all vacations or interruptions whatever as regards this duty; and this he declares to have been the opinion and teaching of the Congregation of the Council of Trent, whose decree on this matter he approves and confirms.

The obligations by which they are bound to instruct their flocks are sufficiently well known to all pastors of souls. The Church has spoken through the decrees of her councils, and the voice of her theologians. And whilst we certainly do not presume to say how far these decrees are to be rigorously interpreted, or how far they are to be modified to meet the exigencies of usage, of custom, or of necessity, matters which can alone be decided by the unerring judgment of those whom the Holy Ghost has appointed to rule the Church of God, we conceive that, abstracting for a moment from mere catechetical instruction, in its ordinary acceptation, and looking at it in its broad view as the instruction of the ignorant, we may fairly cite them, as expressing, with a clearness and distinctness which can neither be blinked nor overlooked, the unmistakable scope and spirit of the Church's teaching on this all-important point.

But, if the Church had never spoken on this matter, would the duty of the pastor of souls be one whit less clear? Would it be less plain that he is bound, by every obligation which can appeal to the heart and

the conscience of a Christian, to train the young and the ignorant of his flock in the service of God; or, in other words, to teach them their catechism; for this, as we shall presently show, is really the meaning of this expression? Reason, enlightened by faith, would be more than sufficient to establish this obligation and its claims. Why is a man called a pastor of souls, unless it be from his obligation to feed his flock? *Pastor a pascendo;* and what is the food with which he is bound to nourish them but the Holy Word of God? *Non in solo pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei.* When he took upon himself that most terrible of all responsibilities which can b econfided to mortal man—the care of souls—the pastor bound himself to provide those committed to his charge with all the succours necessary for their salvation, since the salvation of his flock is the essential end of his ministry. Hence, he bound himself to *teach* them their religion, and the obligations which flow from it. Such instruction is doubly necessary. It is plainly and evidently necessary for those who do not know how to read. It is equally necessary for many others who, though they may be able to read, are so dead to the importance of acquiring a knowledge of their faith—who have so little good will, so little time, or so little intelligence—that they will never acquire the salutary knowledge of their religion which is absolutely necessary, unless they are carefully, continually, and assiduously taught it by their pastor. For such as these there is, morally speaking, no way of being taught their religion, except from the lips of him to whose zeal and pious solicitude they have

been confided: *Fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi . . . . quomodo autem audient sine prædicante?*

The pastor who does not faithfully teach his people their religion, fails in his first and most essential obligation towards them. He is, say the saints, rather a parricide than a pastor, since, as a pastor, he is the father of his people, and it is a principle of law that the father who does not provide his child with becoming nourishment is accountable for its death. *Necare videtur non solum quæ partum præfocat, sed quæ alimenta denegat.* The slothful pastor who disregards the essential duty of teaching his flock, is guilty of the spiritual death, not of one or two persons, but of his whole parish; and it will be well if the curse of ignorance do not descend to generations yet unborn, do not heap coals of fire upon his head ages after he has passed away, and his name has been forgotten in the very parish to which he was a scandal and reproach. It is to him, and to such as he, that St. Gregory speaks, when he says: *Quid nos, O pastores, agimus, qui mercedem consequimur et operarii nequaquam sumus? Fructus Ecclesiæ percipimus, et pro Ecclesiâ minime in prædicatione laboramus.*[1] Such a man sins against society, against the Church, and against God, who, when he made him a pastor, constituted him at the same time his own ambassador to his people. Now, the first duty of an ambassador is to make known the will of his master. If he do not discharge this duty, he is

[1] Hom. xvii. in Evang.

responsible for the evils which may flow from his culpable silence. But more than this, God has also appointed every pastor to be the guardian of religion and virtue in his parish. If he do not instruct his people in the saving truths of religion, he is a faithless guardian; and one who, in his own sad case, will afford too striking a fulfilment of the prediction of the prophet: *Lex peribit a sacerdote.*[1] For, alas, it is but too patent a fact, that in those places where religious instruction is gravely and persistently neglected, all goes wrong. Faith is lost; the sacraments are abandoned; the churches are deserted; men neither know how to pray nor to confess; vice stalks abroad with shameless front; immorality keeps pace with ignorance; *non est scientia Dei in terra; maledictum, et mendacium, et homicidium, et furtum, et adulterium inundaverunt.*[2]

From all this, then, it follows most surely, that every pastor of souls is rigorously bound to take all the means which are morally possible to instruct his people in all those truths, the knowledge of which is necessary, be it *necessitate medii* or *necessitate præcepti*, so that he may be able to say with St. Paul, *mundus sum a sanguine omnium.* And, in truth, if his parishioners be bound to know these truths, *sub gravi*, does it not follow by all order of good consequence that the pastor is bound, by a correlative obligation of equal gravity, to teach them these salutary lessons, since, at least the greater part of his flock will, from one cause or other,

[1] Ezech. vii. 26. [2] Osee, iv. 2.

have no other expedite and sufficient means of acquiring this knowledge, except from the lips of him whom God has given them to be their teacher. Happy the pastor who can put his hand upon his heart and say before his God: If there be one of my parishioners who is in culpable ignorance of essential truths: if at Easter there be one absolution sacrilegious or invalid through ignorance of essential dispositions: if one dying person incur damnation because he dies in ignorance of the principal mysteries, or of the conditions of contrition: I can thank my God that this happens through no fault of mine, since I have explained all these matters so simply, so clearly, and so constantly, that no man of good will can possibly be ignorant of them.

In view of this rigorous obligation and of the dreadful consequences which must inevitably flow to pastor and to people from its neglect, it is little wonder if we find the most eminent theologians devoting their earnest attention to this matter, and laying down, with a clearness which none may escape, what they consider the legitimate and inevitable conclusions to be drawn from the decrees of Councils, and the whole scope of the Church's legislation in regard to religious instruction. Hence, Medina does not hesitate to advance a proposition which certainly cannot be fairly accused of any undue ambiguity. "Advertant quicumque in Christi Ecclesiâ ad pastoralis officii dignitatem assumpti sunt, ad apostolicum prædicationis munus exercendum, naturali divino et ecclesiastico jure ita esse constrictos, ut, nisi id diligenter expleverint, certum subituri sint damnationis supplicium." And from the consideration

of this general proposition we may profitably descend to others which are at once more precise in their application, and which may probably carry even greater weight with them from the names, characters, and position of their authors.

Curam animarum habentes, per se vel per alios idoneos, si legitime impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus plebes sibi commissas, pro suâ et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis . . . . . si quis eorum præstare negligat, per censuras ecclesiasticas cogatur. *De Reform. Sess.* V. *Cap.* II. Such are the words in which the teaching of the venerable Council of Trent on this matter is contained. But that our practice may be in strict accord with this teaching, it is of the utmost importance to arrive at a correct estimate of the Church's meaning, and of the extent of the undoubted obligation contained in the canon just cited. And in the first place we may remark, that there can be no doubt that the Church intends this obligation to be a grave one; an assertion which is sufficiently proved by the fact that Bishops are commanded to enforce obedience to this law even by the infliction of ecclesiastical censures; or, in other words, by a penalty which of its very nature supposes a serious dereliction of duty. Theologians, however, leave us in no uncertainty on this point. Navarre, Collet, Bonacina, Bouvier, St. Liguori, and a host of others have defined with the utmost clearness the extent of this obligation. Whilst they agree that the

or Festival, they also agree that there is a fixed limit beyond which he cannot go without grave culpability. There is a certain difference of opinion, scarcely however amounting to a disagreement as to the precise extent of this limit; but all the theologians whom we have just quoted maintain that a pastor cannot, without a grave fault, neglect to preach, per se vel per alios idoneos, four Sundays in succession, or thirteen Sundays during the course of the year, excepting of course the time allowed for vacation In proof of this assertion it will be sufficient to quote the words of St. Liguori, who affirms that his opinion is in strict accordance with that of the doctors of the Catholic Church. "Doctores affirmant" he says "graviter peccare parochum qui per mensem continuum, aut per tres menses discontinuos concionari omittit, exceptis duobis mensibus in quibus permittit Conc. Trident. parochis, ex justa causâ ab episcopo approbandâ, posse licite abesse."[1] And, in another place: "Etenim, parochus, cum non est legitime impeditus, omittendo concionari per mensem continuum, aut tres menses discontinuos intra annum, a doctoribus non excusatur a gravi culpa."[2]

We might adduce many other authorities to the same effect, but these are more than sufficient for our purpose. And whilst we repeat what we said above, viz., that we most certainly do not presume to say how far these decrees and these opinions of the gravest theologians are to be rigorously interpreted, or how far they are to be modified to meet the exigencies of usage,

[1] *Praxis Confess. n.* 203. [2] *Ib. n.* 52.

of custom, or of necessity, we also repeat that they are more than sufficient to express, with a clearness and distinctness which can neither be blinked nor overlooked, the whole scope of the Church's teaching on this fundamental point, and the immense importance which she has ever attached to the due discharge of this most interesting and most essential duty. Let the zealous pastor frequently meditate on the advice of his great missionary model, St. Francis Xavier. "Instruct your people," he said, "as often as ever you can : there is no other function which will promote in an equal degree the glory of God and the salvation of souls." Let him reflect, too, no less frequently, on the wise maxim of another great saint, who is no less worthy of his closest imitation and his warmest veneration. "Believe me," exclaims St. Francis de Sales, "we can never preach too frequently." "Nunquam satis dicitur quod nunquam satis discitur." Let him take these lessons deeply to heart, and before all and above all, let him strive to realize and to appreciate in all their divine beauty the words of his Master and his Model : "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven :" and there will be little need to remind him of the penalties which he incurs, when he presumes to neglect or to despise the interests of those dear little ones upon whom the divine hands of Jesus Christ were laid with such a wealth of loving benediction, and with such an infinite outpouring of the tender and complacent condescension of His Sacred Heart. "Et complexans eos, et manus imponens super illos, benedicebat eos."

SECTION II.

True Idea of Catechetical Instruction—Its Definition by the Bishop of Orleans—Its Universal Applicability.

In the preceding section, we have sufficiently established the truth, that the pastor of souls is rigorously bound to impart to his people the instruction which is necessary for them, in order to save their souls. We have now to show that by instruction, in this sense, is understood, *par excellence*, catechetical instruction and its true meaning.

As a common rule, it is only through the medium of catechetical instruction—instruction which proposes to explain the fundamental truths of religion in the most simple terms—that this salutary knowledge can be imparted to a flock. As we have explained in another place, the ordinary Sunday sermon is practically useless to attain this object, and can never supply the want of fundamental or catechetical teaching. In their ordinary sermons, preachers do not even pretend to explain elementary truths. They take for granted that their hearers are sufficiently instructed in all these matters, and hence they do not refer to them, except in such vague and general terms as can never suffice to instruct the ignorant. The most that preachers can hope to attain by these discourses is to keep alive in the souls of their hearers that essential knowledge, and those salutary dispositions, which have been already planted there through the means of catechetical instruction.

And, hence, precisely arises one of the most dangerous delusions which can beset the pastor of souls.

Let the pastor, then, be ever more and more firmly convinced of the truth, that, if he is to teach his people their religion, he must be assiduous in the practice of catechetical instruction, and that he must be especially attentive to the young. They have an equal claim upon him and his most tender care with the other members of his flock. If they once emerge from the pliable and impressionable years of childhood, without having acquired a knowledge of their religion, in all human probability they will live and die in their ignorance; as they become immersed in the busy occupations of life, they will grow at once more indifferent to religious truth, as they will find less and less time to devote to its consideration. Hence it is that we meet, but too often, among our people neither prayer nor self-denial, that we find passions without rein, and those duties which must perforce be discharged, discharged without motive or merit; so many sermons, and so little fruit; so many exhortations to virtue, and so little response. It is this deadly ignorance which paralyzes all the efforts of the priest, and renders all his sacred functions of little or no avail. The sinner approaches to the sacred tribunal ignorant of essential truths; he neither knows how to accuse himself of his sins, nor to elicit an act of contrition. On the bed of death he neither understands nor appreciates those acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition, which the priest vainly suggests to him; he has neither patience, resignation, nor the necessary dispositions for the worthy reception

of the last Sacraments; and he dies as he has lived, without hope and without fear, carrying with him to the presence of God the foul load of that ignorance, the curse of which he will never fully understand until he reads it in the light of God's eternal truth.

Catechetical instruction being admitted on all hands to be the primary and most essential means of imparting that salutary knowledge, which we have seen to be so necessary, it becomes, of course, of great importance to obtain a clear idea of the nature of this elementary instruction. Catechetical instruction, then, may be defined to be "A familiar instruction upon the elementary truths of the Christian religion, delivered either under the form of a dialogue, between the catechist and his hearers, or as a special discourse addressed to some particular class of persons needing to be specially instructed." And from this description of it, and from what we said on this matter in the preceding section, it is evident that we draw a broad distinction between catechetical instruction and the mere teaching of the catechism to little children. The teaching of the catechism may be said to be confined to the children. Catechetical instruction embraces the ignorant of every class, be they young or old, rich or poor. Catechetical instruction, therefore, has for its object those *truths* which the Christian is bound to *know*, and those *duties* which he is bound to *fulfil*, in order to save his soul; its immediate and essential end is the instruction of man in all that is necessary or useful for the attainment of his salvation.

The learned Bishop of Orleans beautifully defines

catechetical instruction to be the Christian education of the soul; or, in other words, he shows that the word catechism, properly understood, embraces at least three ideas: the *recitation* of the catechism, the *explanation* of the catechism, and the catechism reduced to *practice*. The mere recitation of the catechism, parrot-like, without an explanation on the part of the catechist, and an appreciation and intelligence on the part of the catechised of its meaning, will avail nothing. The careful recitation of the catechism, with a full appreciation and intelligence of its meaning, will avail no more, unless its precepts and its teachings be reduced to practice; since it is this practice alone which is efficacious for the salvation of the soul; it is this practice alone which, forming the Christian character, brings forth to Christ those souls who have been redeemed by his priceless blood.

From this idea of it, it follows plainly enough, that catechetical instruction does not consist in merely teaching children the words of the catechism. By catechetical instruction, the Church understands such an explanation of her saving truths as that her children, even the youngest of those who have attained the use of their reason, may clearly know and perceive what is required of them in their own proper state of life; an end which will never be secured by the mere committing to memory, parrot-like, of the words of the catechism. And this is a truth which pastors, and all who are concerned in teaching catechism, cannot too deeply impress upon their minds. That faith which is necessary to salvation is not an act of the memory,

but of the understanding; it rests upon the knowledge of Christian truth, and not upon the retention in the memory of the mere words in which that truth is expressed. They only know the catechism who, in their own way, of course, in their own language, and in their own manner of conceiving and expressing a subject, are able to give an account to themselves of the meaning and signification of the Christian doctrine.

Nor let any one foolishly persuade himself that, from this point of view, catechetical instruction is impossible, since the great majority of a flock are so stupid or so ignorant, that the very most you can hope from them, is to succeed in teaching them the words of the catechism. No doubt, many of our poor people are very obtuse and ignorant. No doubt, they demand a good deal of patient labour and of gentle sweetness at our hands. But, admitting all this, either those stupid, obtuse, ignorant people, who try the patience of a pastor so grievously, are capable of grave sin, or they are not. We do not speak of such as are not possessed of sufficient intelligence to be capable of sin. But we speak of such as are capable of sin, and must it not be true that every one who is possessed of sufficient intelligence to be able to sin, no matter how low the measure of that intelligence may be in itself, must also be competent to acquire the knowledge which is absolutely necessary to the recovery of the favour of God, lost by mortal sin? If this be not true, it follows that such a one, being incapable of acquiring that knowledge which is essential to his recovery of the favour of God, is placed necessarily and absolutely in

the state of damnation. Hence, it rigorously follows, too, that as those who are capable of sin must be capable of acquiring the knowledge which is essential to salvation, so they must also be capable of understanding the catechism in which this knowledge is contained, if it be properly, patiently, and perseveringly explained to them.

SECTION III.

The Catechism of Young Children—Its Great Importance and Principal Qualities.

"Multum interest, utrum pauci adsint an multi, docti an indocti, an utroque genere mixti; urbani an rustici, an hi et illi simul, an populus ex omni hominum genere temperatus sit . . . . . quia cum eadem omnibus debeatur caritas, non eadem omnibus adhibenda est medicina."[1]

It is evident that, whilst the same general principles and the same leading qualities which we have already briefly considered, will apply to every kind of catechetical instruction, this instruction will, in conformity with the prudent counsel of St. Augustine, have to be varied according to the necessities, dispositions, and station in life, of our hearers. We may, perhaps, broadly divide this specific catechetical instruction into four great leading heads:—

I. The catechism of little children; II. The catechism of first communion; III. The catechism of perseverance;

[1] S. Aug. *De Catech. Rud.*

IV. The catechism of ignorant adults, and of those who are unable to learn the letter of it; and on each of these subjects, at once so important and full of interest, we now purpose to say a few words.

It is not necessary to impress upon the zealous and experienced pastor the immense importance of attending most assiduously to the instruction of the little children of his flock. And by little children we understand, in this place, those who have not begun to make any special preparation for their First Communion. It has been said, and truly, that the child is the father of the man; no less truly, that as the twig is bent the tree 's inclined; and most truly and most solemnly of all, that if we train up a child in the way in which he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it. It is the universal law, admitting but of few and rare exceptions, that such as is the child, such will be the man. The impressions which are made in childhood are indelible. For good or for evil, they will hardly ever be swept away; and hence the paramount obligation which rests upon the pastor of bringing the dear children of his flock, the children who are to be his glory and his crown, under the influence of religious teaching, as soon as they are capable of comprehending it and of profiting by it. He thus secures them for God, and lays the foundation of those lasting impressions of faith, of piety, and of truth which will bring forth their fruit in due season, and gain to God many souls who, without this early teaching, would wander hopelessly and irrevocably out of the way of salvation. If we do not give our people a real taste and relish for religious instruction when

they are young, they will never acquire it later on. If religion only lay claim to their allegiance when the world has already taken possession of their mind and heart, its claims will be disregarded. If we do not plant the foundation of Christian purity and Christian faith deep in the soul of the youth, before levity, dissipation, and evil passions have made it their own, we shall find that our teaching comes too late, and that our most zealous efforts will hardly repair the evil which has been already done.

But, great as is the importance of thus attending to the instruction of our little children, the difficulty of effectually gaining this end is not small. It is a very difficult thing to know how to speak to children, and one in which comparatively few succeed; and although we now proceed to point out a few of the leading qualities which characterize the successful instruction of children, we candidly confess that it is a matter which must ultimately be left very much to natural qualifications, and to that love for souls which cannot be taught by precept nor acquired by rule; that love for souls which ever renders the true pastor most solicitous for the instruction, the welfare, and the salvation of those innocent children who were so infinitely dear to the loving Heart of Jesus Christ, and whom He blessed, not once, but many times, with such striking marks of His divine predilection and his most tender care.

"Tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos."[1] In these

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 7,

words St. Paul points out the first and most essential quality for succeeding in the instruction of children—a great spirit of sweetness, and an amiability of word, of manner, and of look, that may possess, in its measure and degree, the love of the mother for her offspring, of the nurse for the child committed to her care. We have already referred to the infinite condescension of our Divine Master and Model in his intercourse with little children: "Et complexans eos, et manus imponens super illos, benedicebat eos:" and the true priest of the Gospel will eagerly make his own, and vindicate to himself the touching words of the devout Gerson on this passage: "O sweet Jesus, I am moved in the very depths of my soul when I see you stretch forth your arms in order to draw these little children with such infinite tenderness to your bosom. Yes: I desire to love those whom you have loved so dearly. I wish to imitate your goodness, and to feel for them, as you have done, the tenderness of a mother." In these touching sentiments of the venerable author we have the true secret of dealing with children. We must begin by gaining their hearts, and inspiring them with a great love for us. If they fear us, they will approach to our instructions with repugnance; they will absent themselves as frequently as possible; and, even when they attend, they will do so without interest and merely to avoid punishment. Sweetness and gentleness of manner is the key to the heart of a child. This attaches them to us, whilst rigour intimidates and repels them. A severe tone, a dark and sombre air, sharp or haughty manners, harsh, injurious, or ironical

expressions, quickly and effectually estrange them from us, and cause them to lose all confidence either in ourselves or in our teaching.

Without, then, ever descending to familiarity, or losing sight of the fact that the sweetness which is so amiable and so becoming to the priestly character consists in a certain serenity of countenance, a grave and dignified affability, and a suavity of voice and manner which insensibly gain all hearts, the instructor of children will ever strive to attach them, truly and deeply, to himself, that thus he may win them the more fully and completely to Jesus Christ. Having won their affections, he will turn this circumstance to favourable account, in order to exercise their youthful minds upon the matter of the catechism. He will inspire them with the desire of acquiring a knowledge of it, and he will stimulate their efforts by a judicious use of those means of exciting emulation which his knowledge and experience may suggest. In order to gain his end the more effectually he will carefully abstain from all things which may reasonably be offensive to them. Hence, he will not call them by opprobrious or unbecoming names; he will not demand at their hands more than they can easily render; he will not reprehend them publicly unless the publicity of the fault seem to require such an open correction; he will not cover them with confusion on account of an ignorance or incapacity for which perhaps they are not responsible; and in order to avoid the necessity of punishment, he will, in the spirit of true charity, strive as much as lies in his power, to foresee and prevent the

faults into which they are wont to fall, by the prudent precautions which will be suggested by that charity and love. And if, in spite of all, he sometimes be necessitated to punish them, he will do it with such moderation and self-restraint as to convince the children that he acts simply for their greater good; and thus his very punishments will inspire them with a great desire of correcting their faults that they may regain the affection of their Pastor and their Father. "Instruite in spiritu lenitatis."[1] . . . . . "Tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos."[2]

Besides the possession of that spirit of sweetness and gentleness which is indispensable to the instructor of children, he must also know how to adapt himself to their capacity, and in one sense, to speak their language; and this again is much more difficult than is generally imagined. Like the qualification of which we have just spoken, it can scarcely be taught by precept or acquired by rule. It is the fruit of great zeal, of great experience, and of great good will. We may, however, offer a few suggestions which will be found practically useful on this important matter.

In catechising young children, it is always well to commence by exposing, in a few well-chosen sentences, the principal questions which we are about to treat, dwelling upon their importance, and how fitting it is that all children should understand them very well. By this means we appeal to the interest, the curiosity, and the emulation of the children. There are three principal

[1] Galat. vi. 1. [2] 1 Thess. ii. 7.

methods of teaching the catechism to the young. The first is, to explain it in the form of a simple, but connected and uninterrupted discourse; and this, which can scarcely be called teaching the catechism, in the strict sense of the term, will not be found very well adapted for attracting and retaining the attention of the youthful audience. The second method consists in briefly explaining a small portion—one or two questions and answers—of the catechism, and then causing the children to repeat this explanation. This method obliges them to be attentive, in order to catch the meaning of the catechist; but great care must be taken to render these repetitions lively and interesting, otherwise the lesson will be very likely to languish and grow cold. The third, and most preferable way, consists in explaining a small portion of the catechism in the same manner as we have just described under the second method, and then throwing the explanation into the shape of questions, demanding from the children the answers to these questions, and, of course, taking great care that these answers be correctly given. This method will be found most efficacious in causing them to listen attentively to our explanations; in enabling us to see whether they comprehend our instructions; in exciting them to wholesome emulation, and in developing the latent powers of their intelligence and capacity.

In proceeding, however, by this last method, there are several precautions to be carefully observed, in order to secure success.

The catechist must abstain from all trifling and

trivial questions, such as are equally unworthy of his subject and himself. He must assiduously study how to vary the questions which he proposes, lest his instruction quickly come to lose all its interest. *Identitas est mater tædii.* And, from this point of view, it will be found advisable to break up the matter of the questions as much as possible, in order to give to every word that full signification of which it is capable, and which is due to it. Thus, ex. g. after having explained in a general way to a child why God has created him and placed him in the world, it is useful to proceed to the special reasons which God had in view—the first, second, third, fourth reason, &c. &c.

He should encourage the children to devote the full powers of their minds to the solving of the questions which he proposes to them. To this end he may assume the air of a man who seeks to be instructed. He will take care not to ask of them anything which is above their capacity or information. He will prudently insinuate the answer to them, and put them in the way of giving it with correctness. Simple as all this may seem, it will be found of great practical utility; since, if we inspire the children with this lively interest in the work, and persuade them through little successes of this kind that they are capable of answering the questions which the catechist proposes to them, they will quickly begin to apply themselves to reflect, and to exercise their reasoning powers and their judgment upon the solution of these difficulties; whilst on the other hand, if the questions put to them be above their capacity or attainments, they will presently become

disgusted with the whole affair, and give themselves up to levity and distraction.

It is of great importance to see that the children fully comprehend each question which is proposed to them, and that it makes its due impression upon them. This will be easily judged from their whole deportment, and more especially from their countenances. If we find that they have not comprehended what we said to them, it is necessary to repeat it in other and more simple terms.

We ought to adapt our explanations and interrogations to the capacity, neither of the most intelligent nor of the most obtuse, but to that middle class which will always be in the majority.

In treating moral questions we are not to confine ourselves to the mere exposition of doctrine, but are also to dwell, and that principally, upon those practical conclusions which flow from it, in order that the lives of our hearers may be in conformity with their belief.

In explaining the sixth and ninth precepts of the Decalogue, all those precautions of which we have spoken in another place, are to be rigorously observed and followed out, with all possible prudence and circumspection.

It is very evident that the employment of parables, examples, comparisons, &c., will be especially useful with this class of hearers, and the skilful catechist will not fail to avail himself of that spirit of curiosity, and that love of a story, which are so natural to children.

However much we may labour to make our instruction clear and solid, we shall, nevertheless, be very far

from our end unless we are also able to present it in such a manner as to catch the attention, and conciliate the good will, of the children to whom it is addressed. In other words, the style of catechetical instruction must be *agreeable* and *attractive*. The obligation of *pleasing* is much more rigorous in this than in any other form of instruction. Children are to be caught through their natural desire of being pleased. "We must," says Fenelon, "carefully study the manner of rendering agreeable to a child those duties which we require from him. If the catechism be taught in a cold, dry, uninteresting style, naturally enough the children will pay no attention to it. They will be carried away by a thousand distractions, and there is no other way of meeting this inconvenience than by delivering our instruction in such a style, and enlivened by such an employment of parables, of stories, and of comparisons, as may render it full of attraction and interest to the children." The late Rev. F. Furniss, C. S. R., was probably the most successful catechist of our day, and any one who ever had the pleasure of listening to his instructions to the thousands of children who were wont to gather round his feet, or who has read the valuable works which he left behind him on this subject, will readily understand what a powerful instrument the judicious use of examples, &c., is in the hands of him who knows how to employ it.

Successful catechetical instruction, therefore, will, as a general rule, be plentifully interspersed with comparisons, parables, and examples.

Comparisons drawn from the circle of their ideas, and

from those sensible objects which are most likely to attract their notice, are one of the most assured means of causing children to attend to us and comprehend our meaning. The object taken as the point of the comparison excites their interest, speaks to their imagination, and allays their restlessness. The use which we make of it appeals to the curiosity so natural to their age; and when we come to its application it is easy to read, in the faces of our hearers, the interest which we have excited, and the perfect measure of success which has crowned our efforts. It was thus that Jesus Christ, our Divine Master and Model, was accustomed to teach. *Sine parabolis non loquebatur eis*[1] . . . *Docebat eos in parabolis multa*,[2] and St. Augustine, St. Francis of Sales, Fenelon, and all the great masters of the art of catechising, have faithfully followed in His footsteps. The Bishop of Belley, in his admirable Manual,[3] maintains that this is the only means of combining solid utility with real pleasure in a catechetical instruction. "In order to fix the attention of the children," he says, "upon those truths, at once so sublime, and so little calculated as it may seem at first sight to attract them, we must seek to interest them by comparisons drawn from their daily life and its avocations, by parables and historical facts, and by simple arguments adapted to their intelligence and capacity."

Parables which are merely comparisons, disguised under the form of historical facts, or rather fictions, are specially useful in the light which they throw upon

[1] Matth. xiii. 34. [2] Marc. iv. 2. [3] *Méthode Pratique:* Devie.

definitions; a matter which children ordinarily find it difficult to master. Holy Scripture abounds with examples of this kind of teaching, and these examples are so well known, at least to clerical readers, that it would be loss of time to delay longer on this point. We may merely remark that as the parable is calculated, and is employed, to excite a higher degree of interest than the comparison, so it will, as a natural consequence, be less frequently introduced. When our youthful hearers begin to grow restless and inattentive, the skilful introduction of an interesting parable will be found to have the happiest effect in recalling them to their duty.

Examples, in the sense in which we use the term, are cases of conscience, real or fictitious, which we propose to the children, and which we make them resolve and explain by the application of the principles which we have laid down in explaining the catechism. Thus, after this preliminary explanation, the catechist proposes a certain case or example to his hearers, and demands their opinion of it. This practice, when wisely and judiciously employed, is most efficacious in imprinting deeply upon the minds of the children a clear understanding of the principles and rules of morality, and in causing them to comprehend the nature of sins of thought, of desire, or of morose delectation; and many who would have listened, without interest and without intelligence, to the dry inculcation of their duty, will catch it up at once when it is illustrated and explained by means of a forcible and apposite example.

But more potent in its influence and attraction over the minds of children than either comparison, parable,

or example, is a good story. Everyone knows the love of children for a good story, and the wise catechist will not fail to make use of this propensity of the childish mind and heart, and turn it to his own purpose. A good story unites all the best qualities of the comparison, the parable, and the example. It renders the catechetical instruction, which is so often dry and uninteresting, attractive to the children; it rivets their attention; it helps them to comprehend the truths which are laid before them; it impresses these truths upon the memory, and, touching the heart, renders the impressions made much more likely to be permanent.

It is, however, much more easy to understand the great influence of a good story upon catechetical instruction than to acquire the power of telling it effectively and well. There are comparatively few people who can tell a story well, and fewer still who possess the faculty of thus telling a story which is suitable for religious purposes; and, hence, it is not perhaps very rash to say that it is much easier to become a good preacher in the wide acceptation of the word, than a really good catechist, simple as this latter may seem at first sight. Out of every twenty who are able to gain and rivet the attention of an adult audience, there is probably scarcely one who will have the same influence over an audience of children. There will be scarcely one who will be able to speak with that complete simplicity, and yet in that attractive and engaging manner which are absolutely necessary for success with a congregation of children. And hence so many catechists fall into a deplorable mistake on this point. They persuade themselves, perhaps

without much difficulty, that anything will do for children and is good enough for them. As a natural consequence, they dispense themselves from anything like serious preparation, perhaps from any pretence of preparation, forgetting all the while that he who possesses the faculty of descending to the level of the childish mind and heart, without losing sight of what is due to the dignity of his character and his sacred office, possesses a rare gift indeed; equally forgetting that there is no accomplishment, at once more difficult of attainment, more rarely secured, or more invaluable to its owner, than that simple, touching, and attractive style, which is indispensable to the successful catechist.

It is difficult to say precisely in what the merit of a good story, such as we are considering, consists. Of course it must be, at least substantially, true. It must be sufficiently grave in character, since if it provoke to laughter it will merely tend to dissipate the minds of the children, and cause them to forget the respect which is due to the word of God. It must be, at the same time, somewhat uncommon and striking, either on account of the circumstances related, or because they occurred in the very place in which the hearers dwell, or because the persons concerned were known to them, or, in fine, because there was nothing special in their condition, sex, or rank in life, to assist those whom we propose to the children as their models, to acquire those eminent virtues which we hold up to their admiration. Above all, and before all, of course the success of a story will always depend principally upon the manner in which it is told. It must be narrated in a brisk and telling

style. The facts must be rendered sensible, and brought home to the children by a lively representation of the circumstances which accompanied them. The chief actors must be made to speak, and, so far as it can be done, to appear *in propria persona* before the audience. The *point* of the story must be brought out in such a way as to concentrate the attention of the children upon it, and nothing should be allowed, as the asking of questions, or the like, which may in any way interfere with or distract this attention. Finally, the catechist will naturally, both as a matter of duty and inclination, select his stories from sacred rather than profane history, and we may safely say that the profane history has yet to be written which can bear to be compared with the lives of the saints or with holy writ, in the beauty, the interest, and the attractive simplicity of the stories with which the pages of these works abound.

Amongst many works which will be of use to the pastor on this matter, and in which he will find a copious selection of stories suitable for catechetical instruction, we may mention especially the Historical Catechism by Fleury; Bossuet's Catechism; the Catechism of Constance; the Parables of P. Bonaventure Girandeau; and Father Furniss' Books for Children.

Lastly, he will be vastly more solicitous to engrave upon their hearts deep and lasting impressions of the principal points of Christian Faith and Christian Practice than to load their memories with many matters which may not be essentially necessary, and which only tend to confuse and perplex them.

Such, briefly, so far as we know and understand

them, are some of the leading ideas which will be usefully borne in mind by the catechist of little children. They may assist him to acquire that very precious and very rare faculty which, as we have already said, is much more the fruit of experience, and of great love for souls, than of any mere precept, or of any dogmatical teaching.

SECTION IV.

Catechism of First Communion—Peculiar Nature of this Class—Special Instructions and Preparation—Retreat before, and Exercises after First Communion—Means of Perseverance.

Whether we consider the august nature of the act itself, or its influence upon the whole after-life of a youth, we may safely say that, as the day of his First Communion is the most important of his life, so it will require all the vigilance and earnest care of the zealous pastor to prepare him to discharge this sacred duty in such a manner as to secure those inestimable results which are the fruit of it, when it is made with the proper dispositions.

It is very clear that the instruction of those, who are sufficiently advanced to be engaged in the preparation for their First Communion, requires to be very different in its nature and scope from that which is addressed to, and is suitable for, little children who are learning the first rudiments of their Faith. And, hence, if a pastor attempt to combine these two bodies in one class, the natural result will be, that what is suitable to those who

are preparing for First Communion will be unintelligible to the little children; whilst what is fitting for the instruction of these children, will be simply intolerable and wearisome to those who are more advanced. It is not sufficient for those who are preparing for First Communion merely to know the principal points of the Christian Faith, but they must also be specially instructed in the Sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist, Baptism, and Confirmation; and they must clearly and practically understand the dispositions which are absolutely necessary for the worthy reception of the sacraments, together with the fruits which they produce, and the obligations which they impose upon the recipient.

Hence, the matter for the instruction of this class will be altogether special in its nature, and it should be equally interesting to catechist and hearer. The children should be taught from an early age to look forward with eagerness and anxiety to the day when they shall be found worthy to be admitted to the class of First Communion; and to regard this admission as the highest proof which their pastor can give of his confidence in them, and the best reward which he can offer for their piety and good conduct.

The experience of each one will most fitly decide the age at which it is proper to admit the children of his parish to this class. It may be said in a general way, that it is well to admit them when there is solid hope that they will be properly prepared to make their First Communion within the year; and it may be added that the earlier, *positis ponendis*, we can lead a

child to the holy table of the Lord the better. The love of an innocent child is one of the most priceless and dearest offerings we can make to Jesus Christ. Years of rigorous penance and of pitiless mortification will scarcely render a sin-stained soul as dear and acceptable to the infinite purity of Jesus Christ as the little child who, in all the fragrant grace and beauty of his baptismal innocence, approaches for the first time to receive his Saviour and his God into his guileless breast. It is the love of little children, and the innocent aspirations of their stainless souls when they receive Him in Holy Communion, which are most dear to the Sacred Heart, and which have a very great share in that unceasing Act of Reparation which is ever due to It for the coldness, the indifference, and the sacrileges of an unbelieving and a sinful world. And, hence, the priest who truly understands and appreciates the interests of Jesus Christ, is ever most solicitous that the children committed to his charge make their First Communion before they have grievously sullied the fair robe of their baptism. If their First Communion be deferred until they become more advanced in years, say thirteen or fourteen, it will not be so easy to secure the blessed results at which we have just glanced. At this age innocence begins to bend and tremble before the rude assaults of passion. It is possible that bad habits may have been already formed which will compel the pastor to defer the day of the First Communion from time to time, perhaps indefinitely. As time goes on the postulant will grow more and more ashamed to take his place amongst the children, so much

younger than himself, who are preparing for this great act. After one or two struggles with his convictions and his better nature, he will surrender himself to the dominion of his passions; he will renounce all idea or desire of his Communion; and—oh! terrible judgment of God upon careless pastors—the unfortunate man will in all human probability never think or speak of the matter again until he is stretched on the bed of death, and the affrighted and perplexed minister of God, who has been called in at the eleventh hour, is vainly striving to repair, in a few fleeting moments, the evils of a lost and ruined life: evils and ruin which, in nearly every case, may be traced back to the neglect, or the unworthy reception of that priceless First Communion.

The special instructions for First Communion will commence at least some months before the day appointed for that solemn act. In these instructions, the pastor will not fail to dwell upon and fully develop the greatness and the majesty of Him whom they are to receive: *Opus grande est; neque enim homini præparatur habitatio sed Deo;* the admirable fruit of a good and holy First Communion: *In me manet et ego in eo;* the terrible evil of a bad First Communion: Judas received unworthily, and he has been in hell for nearly two thousand years, and will remain there for all eternity: *Bonum erat ei, si natus non fuisset homo ille.* In these instructions, the pastor may also most usefully dwell upon the four last things, and show how closely they are connected with the holy discharge of this great duty. Having impressed his

youthful hearers with a profound conviction of the greatness and the importance of this action, he will then proceed to instruct them how they are practically and proximately to prepare themselves for it. This practical preparation he may reduce to three great leading points. I. An assiduous attention to the instructions which they receive, and a careful endeavour to reduce them to practice. II. Great regularity and devotion in the discharge of all their duties. III. A vigorous and determined effort to free themselves once and for ever from the slavery of sin, if unfortunately they may have fallen into it.

In order to assist the children in this great undertaking, the pastor should see that they approach the holy sacrament of penance soon after the commencement of these special instructions. By this means he will discover in due time the state of their souls. He will be able to show them the danger of their wounds, to assist them in their fight against their passions, and gradually form them to the practice of piety and virtue.

During the whole time of this preparation, the catechist should carefully study the habits, the manners, and the dispositions of the children; how they attend to their religious duties; their conduct in the church, and during the catechetical lectures; in one word, the whole manner of their life. He should speak about them, but prudently and reservedly, with their parents, teachers, masters, &c. He should compare the impressions of these persons with his own observations and conclusions; and having thus done all in his power to

acquire a full and perfect knowledge of the children, he will proceed to draw up the definite list of those whom he deems worthy to approach the holy table, at least a month before the day. In making this selection, he will wisely steer a middle course between extreme severity and undue indulgence. He will content himself with what is essential, without requiring in a child that perfection which, perhaps, he does not himself possess. When he sees a child exhibiting a real desire to correct his faults, and proving his sincerity by the efforts which he makes, the prudent pastor will close his eyes to many little defects of sloth, of dissipation, of humour, or of obstinacy, which are often more the result of temperament, of character, and age, than the proofs of any real malice. Let him remember the tender love of his Lord for these dear children, and his excess, if there be excess on either side, will surely be on that of mercy.

Having drawn up his list of the first communicants, and assured himself that they have all received the sacrament of baptism, he will at once enter upon the general confession, which, as an ordinary rule, will be made about this time. During the days set aside for this important duty, he will speak to the children with all the warmth and earnestness of which he is capable on the great evils of a bad confession, on contrition and its qualities, on the necessity of confessing all their sins, and of renouncing, once and for ever, and not merely whilst they are preparing for Holy Communion, their sinful habits. As the solemn day approaches he will redouble his zeal and his solicitude; he will speak to

them more frequently and more earnestly; and thus nourish and develop those pious and holy dispositions with which it is fitting they should enter on the retreat which will immediately precede the day of First Communion.

This retreat should continue for three days; and as the lasting fruit of the Communion will depend very much upon the manner in which these are spent, the zealous pastor will apply himself, with all the energy of his heart and soul, to secure the full and complete success of this holy exercise. He will, of course, be guided very much by his own experience, and his knowledge of the special wants of his hearers, in his selection of the subjects which will form the matter of his instruction during the retreat. It may, however, be useful to suggest a course of lectures to be delivered during this time. The introductory lecture, which will be given on the eve of the retreat, may very properly be upon the great importance of the First Communion, and of the retreat, which is one of the principal means of preparing to discharge this holy and tremendous duty well. On the morning of the first day he may speak of the nature and deadly enormity of sacrilegious communion; and in the evening, on the last judgment. On the morning of the second day, he may dwell on the punishments of sin, and in the evening, on the love of Jesus Christ to man, as shown in the institution of the Blessed Eucharist. His morning instruction on the third day may have for its subject the dispositions necessary for the communicant, and in the evening he cannot do better than deliver an earnest exhortation on the motives of contrition.

This exhortation should precede the confession, which the children will, when it is possible, make on the eve of their First Communion. In addition to these instructions, the pastor will, during the days of retreat, prescribe and conduct such other practices of piety and devotion as his own experience may suggest.

Whether we consider the solemnity of the act itself, or its influence upon their whole after-career for time and eternity, the day of their First Communion is undoubtedly the most important of their lives; and, hence, the pastor will surround it with all the pomp and grandeur of religious ceremonial which he can command, that thus he may impress the memory of it more indelibly on the minds of the children. He will summon all the resources of nature, science and art, music and flowers, and costly vestments to his aid. He will, by these external and natural things, impress upon the minds of the children the firm conviction that he, their pastor, considers this day as one worthy of his highest efforts to render it honorable and beautiful before God and man. On the morning itself, he will not distract the minds of the children by any very long or wearisome exercises, but will content himself with a few burning words which he will address to them immediately before and after Holy Communion. And, if he only know how to do it—if his heart do but burn within him at this solemn breaking of bread, this communion of the Lord's Body and Blood, he will, perhaps, do more by these few words to convince his hearers of the awful grandeur and of the tremendous reality of the sacred action in which they are engaged than by all his previous lectures, or

his more laboured instructions. Years ago it was the great privilege of him who writes these lines to assist at the Mass of a holy servant of God, and he can truly say that the tones in which the touching words, "Domine non sum dignus," were uttered, were the most striking, the most powerful, and the most convincing argument to which he ever listened, on the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament of the altar.

Finally, on the evening of this great day, after an appropriate discourse on the nature and meaning of the acts which they are about to perform, the pastor will conduct these dear children to the foot of the altar of the Mother of God, which should be adorned with its choicest decorations, and there each one, with a taper in his hand, and in presence of the holy Gospel, should renew his baptismal vows, and make his act of consecration to the Virgin Mother. The pastor will also do well, where it is practicable, to conclude the exercises of the day with a solemn *Te Deum* and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. He should endeavour, too, to secure the attendance of the children at a Mass of thanksgiving on the morning after that of their First Communion, and take advantage of this opportunity to instruct them on the means of preserving the great grace which they have received; and, as one of the surest means of securing this happy result, he will earnestly exhort them to enter what is called the class of the Catechism of Perseverance, and to enrol themselves in some of those confraternities which the zealous pastor takes care to establish in his parish, and which have for their object regular attendance at religious duties, works of charity

and mercy, and the promotion of faith, of morality, and good manners. By these means they alone can hope to nourish and preserve unsullied the great grace which has been given to them; a grace with which they can trifle only at the risk of their own eternal interests; and which, once lost and cast away, they may never recover again. It is a dangerous and a fearful thing to trifle with the grace of God; most dangerous and most fearful of all to trifle with that grace of graces, the communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

SECTION V.

The Catechism of Perseverance—Great Importance of this Class—Means of ensuring its Success—Sunday-Schools, Confraternities, &c. &c.

"Proh dolor! quàm multi parochi pariunt in nonnullis Christum et statim eorum curam omittunt! et quæ hæc impietas est! nec bestiæ hoc faciunt, quæ partus suos lactant, fovent, nutriunt et ab adversis quibuscumque tutantur . et tu tenellum sic deseris! quandò magis insudasse oportuerat, otio tepescis! . . . magna culpa, fratres, et hæc magna segnities, imò magna sævities . . . non dormit, fratres, non dormit dæmon, sed insidiatur continuò . . . Ideò nos continuâ sollicitudine angi debemus et quod peperimus custodire."—*St. Charles Borromeo.*

It is a lamentable fact, and one never sufficiently to be deplored, that many children who, during the tender years of youth, have been models of virtue and piety,

begin, soon after their First Communion, to fall away, seduced by evil companions, overcome by the influence of the world, or the growing power of their own passions. To some extent, at least, may we not apply to ourselves the eloquent words of the learned Bishop of Orleans, speaking on this subject: "Let us not deceive ourselves on this point," he says. "Is it not too true that the majority of our youth slip from our hands the day after their First Communion? Those whom we save, and who persevere in virtue, are truly, to use the comparison of Holy Writ, but the ears of corn gleaned after the harvest. The harvest is gathered by the devil, by vice and impiety, whilst we have to content ourselves with securing the stray ears which escape them."[1] In all our great towns how frequently does it not happen that immediately, or, at all events, not very long, after their First Communion, the pastor begins to lose sight of the children whom he instructed with so much zealous care, and to whom he administered, with such heartfelt and earnest devotion, that sacred rite. The fault may rest to some extent with himself. It may be that, having laboured with all his heart and soul to prepare his children for their First Communion, the pastor then begins to relax his efforts, thinking that all is done, and their religious training complete. However, no matter what the cause may be, the fact remains, and the fact is as we have stated it. The evil is as melancholy and disastrous as it is indisputable. For this evil there is, to use once more the words of the same

[1] *Entretiens sur la Prédication Populaire.*

illustrious prelate whom we have just quoted, but one remedy, and this is, the establishment of what we may call the Catechism of Perseverance.

As the Catechism of Perseverance differs in its immediate object from that of First Communion, so it is also to be conducted in a manner somewhat different, and to be governed by rules proper to itself. Some of these rules we now proceed to suggest.

I. As the Catechism of Perseverance is intended for those whose attendance may fairly be considered more or less voluntary, they should be treated with more regard, and managed with more feeling and delicate judgment than is necessary when there is question of children preparing for their First Communion. Not the least part of this delicate feeling and judgment will be exhibited in the welcome with which the pastor will always receive those who attend this class, in the congratulations on their perseverance and assiduity with which he will address them from time to time, and in the marks of honor and esteem which he will bestow upon them. He will labour more and more earnestly to attach them to himself, and to aquire over them that personal influence which becomes in him, who knows how to employ it, such a powerful engine for good. The famous saying of St. Francis, about the honey and the vinegar, has no more intimate application than in the case of youth such as will ordinarily compose the class of the Catechism of Perseverance.

II. From the idea which we have given of it, it follows that the instructions which are addressed to the members of this class should be more carefully pre-

pared, and contain more substantial matter than those which may do very well for little children. They should be of such a nature that the children, even those who are best instructed, will listen to them with real pleasure, and derive real profit from them. They should interest, through the clearness of expression and of method which should reign in them, and by the skilful employment of those comparisons, examples, &c., to which we have already referred, and which have such a special attraction for those who are passing from the simplicity of childhood to the inquisitiveness and the desire of knowing which are characteristic of early manhood. Eschewing merely theological or scientific arguments, as well as those which are dry in their nature, or above the comprehension of his youthful audience, the pastor will, in the course of his instructions, treat those objections, those false principles, and those vile sophistries, which surround youth on their entrance into the world, and which unhappily succeed in drawing so many promising children from the paths of virtue and religion into the lowest depths of unbelief and infamy.

III. In every well-organized class of the Catechism of Perseverance, the practice of Monthly Communion will hold a very prominent position. There is no necessity of speaking in this place of the incalculable advantages which must attend the worthy performance of this holy duty. It may be more to the point to glance at an evil which, whilst there is scarcely much danger of its becoming common, is still sufficiently practical to merit a word of caution and warning. Whilst, then,

the pastor who has the interests of these dear children truly at heart will do all in his power to promote the practice of Monthly Communion, and to prepare them to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord worthily, he will cause them to understand that this practice is perfectly free, that there is no obligation of performing it, and that those who think fit, for sufficient reason, or by the advice of their director, to abstain from approaching the Holy Table, will not be less highly esteemed than their companions. Without these precautions, this practice of Monthly Communion is liable to an abuse to which there is no necessity of making further reference. And, in view of this danger, and in order to guard against it, it will be well worth the pastor's while to consider whether he cannot arrange matters in such a way that there may always be some members of this class who will not communicate on the very day of the Monthly Communion.

In many, perhaps in most places—at all events it is so in England—the Catechism of Perseverance will be identified to a great extent with the Sunday School, which is now a recognized institution in most missionary countries. These Sunday Schools, whilst they do not overlooks ecular instruction, at least in some measure and degree, have, of course, for their primary object the education, in Christian faith and morality, of that large class who are, for all practical purposes, out of the reach of the pastor, be he never so zealous or painstaking, during the week. Shut up in the workshops of our great manufacturing towns, engaged in domestic occupations, or drawn away from the sphere of their

pastor's influence by a thousand inevitable circumstances during the six days of the week when they are toiling for their bread, it surely does not require many words to show that, unless they can be brought together on a Sunday and taught the rudiments of their faith, or, if they should already know these, have that knowledge kept alive by constant repetition and careful instruction, they will be speedily lost to the Church, and to truth. And hence you may, as a general rule, at all events in the larger towns, make a pretty good guess at the zeal of the pastor and the state of his flock, by the efficiency or otherwise of his Sunday School. And hence, too, it is that these same Sunday Schools have taken such root amongst us, and are worked in most cases with an energy which is as edifying as its results are satisfactory.

In addition to the instruction of those who attend it, which is necessarily the first object of the Sunday School, there is a secondary result which is by no means to be overlooked in our estimate of the ways and means of doing the work of God; and it is this: as the superintendence of the various classes in the Sunday School is usually undertaken by the most respectable members of the congregation, whose zeal and piety induce them to give their time and their labour to this great work of charity and mercy, the rich and the poor, the more respectable and the humble, are thus brought into immediate contact with each other, and the great spirit of Christian brotherhood is developed and fostered with the happiest results for time and eternity. The rich learn to love the poor, and the poor to respect

the rich; whilst the pastor, as he walks from class to class, from room to room, encouraging, consoling, or reproving as he passes on, thus acquires a personal and intimate knowledge of a very large number of his flock, which he would scarcely gain in any other way.

The first provincial synod of Malines treats of this important matter in words so full of wisdom and of practical application, that we need offer no apology for quoting them at some length :—

"1. Cum non omnes quotidianas scholas frequentare possint, sed multi per hebdomadam artificiis aut aliis domesticis occupationibus distineantur, quorum tamen parentes sæpe ad instituendas suas proles inidonei sunt; ideo ad satisfaciendum Decreto Concilii Tridentini, curent Episcopi præter quotidianas scholas, etiam dominicales in omni parochia institui, in quibus una aut altera hora, diebus dominicis et festivis, lingua vernacula bene et distincte, omnes prima principia religionis, videlicet orationem dominicam, symbolum apostolorum, et alia supradicta memoriter edoceantur, addita per pastorem vel sacellanum, facili, et qualem illa ætas admittit, explicatione ad gustum aliquem intelligentiæ, ut omnes rebus sacris debitam reverentiam ab initiis primæ ætatis tribuere discant.

"2. Etsi hæ scholæ non proprie instituantur ad litteras discendas, aut artem scribendi atque legendi; poterit nihilominus juventus in his doceri, postquam in prædictis utcumque instituta fuerit : et curent Episcopi quosdam libellos designari ad instituendam juventutem secundum hanc formam aptos

"3. Ad petulantiam cohibendam, et vitanda pericula, in omnibus parochiis, masculi a puellis, quantum fieri poterit, seorsim instituantur: atque puellis, quæ sæpe erunt grandiusculæ, una aut altera honesta matrona præficiatur, quod ad sexus illius instructionem magis congruit; masculis autem, viri ad hoc idonei.

"4. Et nisi aptior locus inveniatur, poterunt hæ scholæ in templis institui, ut etiam reverentia cohibeantur, atque illic pastores singuli in suis parochiis superintendant, &c."[1]

IV. A powerful auxiliary to the Catechism of Perseverance will be those pious confraternities and associations which are happily now so common. To take an illustration, it would be quite impossible to estimate the benefit which has been done in this way by the Young Men's Society, which owes its establishment to the zeal and piety of a well-known and distinguished ecclesiastic, whose name has long been identified with every good work of religion, charity, and social progress.

Employing these precautions, we can scarcely, or at least not so easily, lose our hold on these young children of God. If, after their First Communion, we can secure their entrance into the Catechism of Perseverance; if in due time, say two or three years, according to their age, we can succeed in persuading them to enrol themselves in some one or other of those pious societies which have for their object the practice of the duties of religion, the exercise of works of charity, and the promotion of Christian brotherhood; we shall have

[1] *Synodicon Belg. Archiep. Mechl. Auct. de Ram.* Tom. I, p. 121.

done most, perhaps all, that is necessary to secure them against the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil. If we be inclined to shrink from the labour and the continual watchfulness which all this seems to suppose, let us, for the sake of the interests of God, and for the salvation of those for whom we are surely responsible, meditate seriously, earnestly, and prayerfully, the solemn words which stand at the head of this section, and we shall be stirred up to the constant and self-sacrificing discharge of this duty: *Non dormit, fratres, non dormit dæmon, sed insidiatur continuo.* If we are to save the children of God for their Creator and Redeemer, it will be by the exercise of a laborious diligence, not less than that of him who labours without ceasing and without rest for their destruction: *Ideo nos continuâ sollicitudine angi debemus et quod peperimus custodire.*

SECTION VI.

Instruction of Ignorant Adults—Great Difficulty of this Matter—Practical Means—Advice of Benedict XIV.—The Leading Qualifications of a Successful Catechist: Learning, Piety, Zeal, and Prudence.

"Affirmamus magnam eorum partem qui æternis suppliciis damnantur eam calamitatem perpetuò subire ob ignorantiam mysteriorum fidei quæ scire et credere necessariò debent: multi enim laborant ignorantiâ crassâ articulorum fidei quos explicitè scire et credere tenentur æquè ac sacramentorum."

In these plain but significant words, does the great Pope, Benedict XIV., remind us of a truth whose importance can be hardly over-rated, but of which we are too apt to lose sight. We scarcely realize to ourselves that there are in many, perhaps in most parishes, a certain number of adults who are so ignorant of those mysteries and elementary truths of religion, which every man is bound to know, as to be out of the pale of salvation on account of this very ignorance. And yet, such is the fact. Nor is this lamentable degree of ignorance always to be confined to the poor and the lowly. It has place, at least in some cases, amongst those who are well educated in other respects, and who occupy a respectable position in the world. Either these unfortunate men were never solidly instructed in the rudiments of their faith, or the knowledge which they once possessed has passed away from them as completely as if they had never been instructed. Ignorant of the essential truths of the faith, they live on, perhaps contentedly, in this state of damnation, and die as they had lived, unless, by some happy chance, their pastor becomes awakened to their lamentable ignorance, and adopts the necessary means of remedying so great an evil.

The evil is as great as it is certain, and we shall do well not to blind our eyes to this fact because it is one which is not pleasant to behold. Let us not make ourselves too certain, or be too ready to believe, that, because a man seems well up in the affairs of the world, and able to converse with fluency on worldly matters, he is therefore equally well instructed in those truths, the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation. On

the contrary, let us be honest enough to look the truth full in the face, and to persuade ourselves that there are, in all probability, at least some adults in our parish, be they high or low, rich or poor, who are in a state of gross ignorance; and, realizing this fact, let us apply ourselves no less honestly to find a remedy for it.

It requires no words to show that the instruction of adults, labouring under ignorance such as this, must, from the very nature of the case, be a work of the utmost difficulty, and one requiring great delicacy and management. If you tell such persons openly, and in so many words, that they are ignorant of the very elements of their religion, and beg them to come to you to be instructed, in all probability you offend them mortally and repel them from you. You may, no doubt, according to the counsel of Benedict XIV., advise such persons to come to catechism, to stand side by side with their children, but are they likely to follow your advice? You may impose such attendance upon them as a sacramental penance; but, even supposing such a penance to be salutary, is it one which they are likely to fulfil? Most likely they will prefer to remain in their ignorance, rather than be rescued from it by means so repugnant to flesh and blood.

What, then, is to be done? The remedy is not so very difficult, and it is one which is sufficiently practicable, in those countries at least, where the adults are accustomed to attend the afternoon service at which the public catechism of the children usually takes place. In these places it is customary to collect the children round the foot of the altar. The pastor interrogates

them on the matter of the catechism, and when he has satisfied himself that they possess it, he proceeds to explain it to them, and to instruct them more and more fully in its meaning and signification. Now, Bossuet, and all the best authorities on this subject, recommend us to prepare this explanation and instruction in such a manner that it may be equally useful to the adults and the children; and to address it as much to those as to these. "Il faut faire le catéchisme non-seulement aux enfants, mais *principalement* aux pères de famille." In this simple form of instruction, which is ostensibly addressed to the children, the pastor has, if he know how to avail himself of it, the most efficacious means of removing the ignorance under which some of the adults amongst his hearers may labour, without holding them up to derision or wounding their self-love.

Such a method of instruction admits of great simplicity, whilst it may also be rendered very attractive and interesting. The pastor takes in his hand the book of the catechism, advances to the altar rail, round which the children are arranged, and proceeds to interrogate them in the portion which has been assigned to them to learn. There is great emulation amongst children in such a position, and in most cases the answers which they give are listened to with quite as much, perhaps with more interest, than the words of the pastor himself. After he has interrogated them sufficiently, either in the letter or in the meaning of the catechism, he then proceeds to give that instruction which may be addressed, quite as much, or, as Bossuet says, even more to the

heads of the family than to the children. In this method lies one of the great secrets of instructing the ignorant adult. He does not conceive that you are speaking to him, and hence he listens to you with interest and attention. He is thrown off his guard; his self-love and his conceit are effectually provided for; and he is as pliable in your hands as the little child who stands at your feet, and in his innocent simplicity and his undoubting confidence, drinks in the words of salvation from your lips. Any one who has seen, and still more, who has conducted the catechetical instruction in a well-ordered English church, must be thoroughly aware of the truth of what we say, and equally aware that the pastor who neglects to avail himself of it, throws away one of the most efficacious, perhaps the only means within his reach, of instructing those for whose salvation he will have to answer to God. Those general qualities which are applicable to every kind of catechetical instruction are still more essential and more practically useful in this, which has for its principal object the instruction of the ignorant adult; and hence, this may be the most fitting place in which to treat some of the qualities of catechetical instruction at which we have not yet glanced, and with the consideration of which we will conclude this most important subject. We have reserved this consideration for the last place, since it has more immediate reference to the catechist himself, whilst the ideas which we have presumed to throw out, and the truths which we have already treated, are more directly connected with the catechism and those to whom it is addressed.

The successful catechist must be an educated man. It may not be necessary that he be a profound theologian, or a man of burning eloquence; but he must possess clear, solid, and exact ideas, and be thoroughly made up in what we may call the essential portions of theology, viz., the Symbol, the Sacraments, the Commandments of God and the Church, the virtues and vices, &c. &c. And the reason of this is sufficiently obvious. He is bound by the obligations of his ministry to explain all these matters with clearness and precision; to adapt his explanations to the capacity of the young, the simple, and the ignorant; to vary his expressions and to modify his turn of thought, as occasion may require, without obscuring the clearness of his doctrinal teaching; and how can he do all this if his own mind be a chaos of uncertainty and confusion? To be a successful catechist requires more than a mere superficial knowledge of the subject. He alone will succeed who knows how to combine a course of serious reading and theological study with the habit of close and exact reasoning. More than this, too, he must be able by mature reflection, and by the study of standard authors on this particular matter, to express himself not only intelligibly, but in such a manner as to please and interest his hearers, be they young or old, well-instructed or ignorant. Now, the catechist who does not possess sufficient knowledge to enable him to discharge these duties as he ought, will be certain to go lamentably astray in the matter of his teaching. He will teach heresy without knowing it. At one time he

will put upon his people obligations which God and His Church never imposed upon them. At another he will teach them that they are not bound by the gravest laws. Thus, his inexact teaching; his false decisions, at one time too lax, and at another too severe; will, in all probability, be the cause of innumerable sins in his flock, since it is thus that false consciences are formed. Without the judgment to perceive the points on which he ought to insist, he will lose his own time and that of his people, in the consideration of useless and frivolous subjects. He will not know how to bring his subject before his flock in such a manner as to inspire them with an elevated idea of the truths of their faith, and to fill them with a great love and esteem of it. He will not possess those exact ideas of his matter which will enable his hearers to seize it with ease, and to retain it with pleasure, simply because it is so clear; nor those appropriate words which will most plainly and exactly express the ideas which he wishes to convey; nor that order which best suits the natural progression of those ideas, and which puts everything in its right place. The inevitable result of all this will be that his own ignorance, and his own confusion of mind, and his own false ideas, will be reproduced in his hearers. The ignorant or careless pastor will as surely be surrounded by an ignorant or careless flock. The blind undertakes to lead the blind; what wonder if he and they fall into the ditch?

Learning is a great thing in its way, and is, as we have just seen, absolutely necessary in the catechist; but piety and zeal are something greater still, and more

essential to success. When considering the subject of persuasion,[1] we have seen that the great secret of moving others is to be moved ourselves. Men are not moved to holy resolutions and inspired with generous impulses by him who is destitute of the one and insensible to the other. Hence, we may readily judge how essential a tender spirit of piety is to him who has to deal with the young or the ignorant. Piety may, in some sense, and to some degree at least, supply the want of learning; but no amount of learning can ever take the place of that spirit of piety which is such an essential qualification in him who undertakes to do the work of God. And hence it is that the humble, painstaking pastor, who is thoroughly pious and devoted to his work, often produces much more of that fruit which is to remain, than the man of deep learning, of brilliant parts, and of showy attainments, whose heart grows cold to God and the things of God, in proportion as it becomes keen in the pursuit of learning for its own sake, and loses sight of the great truth that these things are comparatively worthless, except in so far as they help us to discharge the duties of our ministry more faithfully and efficaciously.

The man whose heart is filled with the spirit of God will be a man of zeal. He will be possessed by an ardent desire of causing his people to know and to love their God, and thus secure the salvation of their souls. Unless his labours be inspired and animated by this spirit of zeal, they will soon become insufferably tedious

[1] Sacred Eloquence. Chap. 9.

and distasteful to him. The levity and indocility of the children, the grossness and stupidity of the ignorant, will soon fill him with such a disgust for instructing them, that he will undertake this duty with the utmost repugnance, and as a necessary consequence, discharge it without interest and without fruit. But, on the contrary, if he be inspired by a lively zeal and a great love of God, the catechist will, in this very spirit of zeal, find that courage which will enable him to triumph over all difficulties. It will supply him with an invincible spirit of patience to conquer the natural ennui and disgust which he may find in the discharge of this duty. It will encourage him to persevere, and stimulate him to employ all the diligence in the preparation of his instructions, which is absolutely necessary for their success.

And, after all, what wonder is it, or rather ought it be, to find the minister of God animated with some small portion of that spirit of zeal, that desire to save souls, which the enemies of God display in their efforts to ruin these same souls. As the Abbé Mullois[1] says so well in his eloquent work: "The wicked, indeed, afford us Christians some most humiliating and painful lessons, enough to make us hide our faces from very shame, so much so, that we can wish nothing better than that the best amongst us might possess that zeal for what is good which the wicked evince for what is evil." And again, "we censure the wicked, and are right in doing so; but let us at any rate do them this justice, that they

[1] *Cours d'Eloquence Sacrée, par M. L'Abbé Mullois.*

are adepts in their profession . . . . they profess their opinions boldly . . . . they are zealous and active . . . . they are energetic, and ready to sacrifice everything, repose, money, liberty, even life itself. Then, how adroit they are! how expert in making themselves great with the great, and little with the little! And we! . . . . we Christians, who know the worth of men's souls, whose duty it is to save them, rest satisfied with a few slender efforts directed often by mere routine!"

Yes, the true minister of God—the true catechist—will be a man of zeal. His zeal will embrace, with an equal love and solicitude, all those who have been intrusted to his pastoral care. He will realize to the full the truth, that every soul is of equal value before God; that before God there is no distinction of rich and poor, of the ignorant and of the highly educated; and he will make this truth the great principle of his action in dealing with his flock. If his zeal admit of any exception of persons, it will be in favour of those dear children who may not as yet have lost the priceless charm and grace of their baptismal innocence, and who, on this account, are so infinitely dear to the Heart of God: in favour of the blessed poor, who are scarcely less dear to God, or less intimately wound up with the deepest designs of His love, and the most profuse bestowal of His choicest graces and benedictions: in favour of those poor children, so hapless and so mysteriously visited, who have had the misfortune to be born of parents without faith and without morality—those poor children who have been reared amidst ignorance

and sin—who have sucked in the poison of vice with their mother's milk—who have had sin in all its deformity, and vice in all its shameless wantonness, for ever before their eyes—who have scarcely heard of the name of God except in blasphemy, or of the mysteries of religion, except when they have been profaned and turned into ridicule. To such as these, in truth, the heart of the true priest of God goes out with a great yearning, a tender compassion, an ineffable love. He travails for these dear children all the more bitterly, because he is but too conscious that if he cannot win them to God, whilst there is at least some poor shred of the grace, and the innocence, and the pliability of the childhood which has been so miserably defaced and contaminated remaining to them, they will be lost to him for time, and to their God for all eternity.

True zeal has two great characteristics: it is sweet and it is prudent; and to no one who exercises the ministry of the Word, in any of its varied departments are these characteristics of zeal more essential than to him who discharges the duty of the catechist.

Men, as we have already said more than once, are only gained to the service of God, and retained in the same, by charity and sweetness; and if this be true of men in general, how much more so is it when there is question of children, and of the poor and the ignorant? St. Augustine tells us that he was first attracted to think favourably of the Christian religion, and that he owed the beginning of his conversion to the sweetness and charity of St. Ambrose: *Cœpi amare hominem*

non ut doctorem veritatis, sed ut benevolum in me.[1] Many men, and good men too, know not how to make children and the ignorant love them. They do not possess, or if they possess it, they either do not, or they cannot, manifest that true charity which is the key to every heart. Sometimes they show that false condescension which is almost as mischievous as the contrary failing. They flatter when they ought to correct; they know not how to refuse; they allow the children to become too free and familiar with them: or, what is more likely, the catechist assumes an air of severity and rigour; he is harsh in his rebukes, cold and distant in his manner, stern in his bearing; he speaks in angry, bitter, or ironical language; he demands from the children more than they can reasonably be expected to know; and he covers them with shame and confusion before their fellows, perhaps before the whole congregation of the church, on account of their ignorance or incapacity; he makes neither allowance for the levity and inconstancy of the childish heart, nor the grossness and stupidity of the poor adult, who has grown up in ignorance, neglect, and sin. The inevitable result is, that he never gains the confidence of those whom he is bound, on so many titles, to win to God. He never succeeds in securing their love and esteem, and thus never succeeds in laying the foundation of all true influence over them. He forgets the example of his Divine Master, who drew these same little children to his breast with such a wealth of

[1] *Confess.* lib. v.

infinite condescension and love, who laid his hands upon them and blessed them.[1] He forgets the teaching of St. Paul, who tells him that he is to instruct, in a spirit of meekness and charity: *Instruite in spiritu lenitatis*;[2] and who himself acted with his flock as a nurse with the children committed to her care: *Tanquam si nutrix foveat filios suos.*[3] He makes out for himself a different line of conduct from that suggested by St. Bernard, who tells us that we are to act as mothers, and not as lords and rulers: *Matres esse, non dominos;* and then he cannot understand how it is that the children fly from him, that they never attend his instructions but with repugnance; that they listen to him with undisguised weariness or affright when they chance to come; that they seize every opportunity, lawful or unlawful, for remaining away.

Thus, he takes a great deal of pains perhaps, and yet there is no result. He sows, it may be diligently and laboriously, and yet he never reaps. Ah! if he would only try to realize the infinite love of Jesus Christ for the young and the ignorant, and the infinite tenderness of His dealings with them; if he would learn how to speak to these persons with sweetness and affability; if he would only get rid of the knitted brow, the unsympathizing look, and the cold, harsh word; if he would only learn to be a little forbearing with the levity and the natural inconstancy of the child, and a little patient with the stupidity of the poor, ignorant adult; if he would only put on the spirit of St. Ber-

[1] Marc. x. 16. [2] Gal. vi. 1. [3] 1 Thess. ii. 7.

nard, the spirit of St. Paul—in one word, the spirit of Jesus Christ, meek and humble of heart—of Jesus Christ, who came to cast the fire of His love upon the earth—of Jesus Christ, whose last words were a prayer for the ignorant and the erring; then would things go very differently with him. Then would his labour be no longer thrown away, nor his toil without profit or fruit. Then would it be his happy and his blessed lot to reap the good fruit a hundredfold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting.

If sweetness be one of the characteristics of true zeal, prudence is no less essential. As we all know, there is a zeal which is not according to knowledge—a zeal which is ill-regulated and undisciplined, and which, on this very account, is injurious in its very earnestness, and fruitless in its most laboured efforts.

M. Hamon, in his excellent work, treats this matter very fully and very practically, in showing the different objects upon which the true spirit of zeal will naturally be employed.

And, in the first place, he shows how absolutely necessary the spirit of prudence is for self-government; that a man may know how to restrain himself, and regulate the sallies of that impetuous zeal which is frequently so ill-judged and so unfortunate in its results. If a man deliver himself over to the dominion of that false zeal, which receives every suggestion of the imagination as a manifestation of the will of heaven, he will frequently be led grievously astray; and one sally of this false spirit will often be sufficient to alienate the hearts of the young and the ignorant hope-

lessly from him. The zeal which is regulated by prudence never acts upon a first impulse, or listens to the first promptings of the heart; but it waits until the fervour of that first impulse has passed away, until that first prompting of the heart has been subjected to the test of reason and of reflection. It calmly calculates the consequences of every measure before adopting it—the result of every word before uttering it. In one word, the man whose zeal is regulated by prudence, is never governed, in his intercourse with others, by merely natural instincts, nor are his acts the manifestations of his merely natural character.

Prudence is equally necessary to enable a man to adapt himself to the various classes of persons to whom his ministry may be addressed. There are some who require to be restrained, others who need to be stimulated and urged on. There are some circumstances in which a man must be sweet and gentle, and know how to console and encourage; others, in which he must be prompt to reprove and correct. In his dealings with boys, he must be firm when he speaks to them in general, mild and gentle when he addresses anyone in particular. His intercourse with young people of the other sex must be regulated by the very contrary principles: that is to say, when he addresses them in general it must be with the utmost affability and gentleness; when he has occasion to speak with anyone in particular, he will employ the utmost caution and reserve. And from these brief remarks it is easy to see how essential it is that our dealings with others, especially the young, be regulated by that prudence

which knows how to adapt itself to circumstances, that prudence which is the offspring much more of sound sense than of any mere technical rules or suggestions.

The man whose conduct is regulated by prudence will never be guilty of such an indiscretion as that which is committed by him who, in his dealings with his flock, shows any exception of persons. It is very natural for one to be more attracted to a child who is handsome and well-dressed than to one who is ill clad, and who exhibits in his person, his language, and his whole deportment the marks of that poverty and indigence in which he has been reared. Now, if the catechist so far forget himself as to be influenced by these merely human instincts; if he show more affection for the rich than for the poor, for the well-dressed and genteel than for the shabby or the ragged; if he speak more gently to the one than to the other; if he reward the respectable child without being equally liberal to the poor one, who may be just as meritorious, he will inflict an irreparable injury upon the work of his ministry, since he will, by this ill-judged and human preference, infallibly alienate from himself the heart of the child who is thus unjustly slighted and passed by. When the heart is thus alienated, that mutual confidence, which is the foundation of all the good that one man may hope to do another, is inevitably swept away. The children who are thus slighted because they are poor, and poor without any fault of theirs; or because they are rough, dirty, or uncouth—and, God help them, how could they be otherwise?—will be quick to perceive the affront, and as quick to resent it. That sensibility

which fills so large a place in the heart of a child, which is so keen in its perception, and so bitterly resentful of contempt or neglect, will be hopelessly wounded, and turned away from the pastor who acts in this unworthy manner. Nor is the sensibility of a child less keen, or his perception of neglect less acute, because he happens to be poor. On the contrary, it is all the more so on this very account. The child—the Catholic child, at all events—who is kicked about and buffeted by the world at large; who scarcely ever sees a kindly look, or listens to a gentle word, turns to its priest with an unwavering confidence, so full, so generous, and so complete, as to seem like a very instinct of its nature. That instinct seems to prompt it to look to him alone in all the world for sympathy and for equal-handed justice. The little face, so pinched and careworn, brightens up when he approaches; and the kind word of encouragement, or of consolation, which drops from his lips is treasured up, and remembered with an effusion of grateful recollection which is as precious in itself as it is, in all probability, unthought of and unheeded by him who utters it. The man who does not realize these things—who speaks to the poor child harshly because it is poor—who turns away from it with ill-disguised disgust because it is uncouth or badly clad—who fails to see the face that brightens up, and the eye that fills with light, on his approach—who cannot perceive the timid, yet trusting confidence with which his presence is hailed, and his words received, throws away and rejects a treasure of confidence and love, which is all the more price-

less because it is not really his but his Master's—all the more priceless, because if it once be lost it will be lost for ever.

Nor are the evil results which follow from this imprudent exception of persons confined to the children alone. The parents will be equally quick to take offence—to resent the affronts or the slights passed upon their children; and, on this account, to withdraw their confidence and their obedience from their pastor.

The prudent pastor will avoid these inconveniences, so grave in themselves, and so disastrous in their consequences, by the strict impartiality and the even-handed justice of his dealings with the members of his flock. He will treat all alike. When he rewards the child of wealthy parents, he will reward the poor who may be equally deserving. If he speak to the one, he will address the other in terms no less warm and kind. In one word, as we have already said, if he ever be led to make an exception, it will be in favour of virtue, piety, docility, and obedience alone.

In fine, the prudence of the pastor who possesses this virtue will manifest itself in the manner in which he will adapt himself and his discourses to the age, the character, the capacity, and the special necessities of his hearers. The froward will be rebuked, and the timid will be encouraged. Those who are doing their best, in spite of ignorance or natural incapacity, will be stimulated and urged to persevere; whilst those who are abusing or neglecting to cultivate the talents which God has given them, will be reproved, and, if reproof be found insufficient, punished. And most especially

will this spirit of prudence be shown in the treatment of those delicate subjects which cannot be passed over in silence, but which require the utmost tact, knowledge, and discretion in him who undertakes to speak of them to the young, the ignorant, and the innocent. The prudent man will guide himself in this matter by those rules and principles of action at which we have already glanced when speaking of the Virtues and Vices, &c.,[1] and thus avoid the two extremes, equally dangerous and pernicious, of saying too much or too little.

SECTION VII.

Recapitulation of Matter to be Taught at Catechism—Method of preparing the Instruction—Its principal Qualities—Authorities to be Consulted.

In the preceding sections we have probably indicated with sufficient clearness those subjects which, at one time or another, will naturally form the matter of catechetical instruction. It may not, however, be useless, briefly to recapitulate and bring these subjects once more, plainly and distinctly, before the mind of the young preacher.

He may, then, in purely catechetical instruction propose to himself to treat of all those matters which relate to faith and morals, and he will confine himself to these subjects. In such teaching mere speculations, probable opinions, unpractical discussions, and far-fetched or uncommon objections, are altogether out of place.

[1] See page 190.

He will dwell with especial emphasis upon the fundamental truths and the principal mysteries, repeating them again and again, until he can reasonably persuade himself that his hearers possess them, not merely with their lips, but with their minds and their hearts.

He will explain all those subjects, the knowledge of which is necessary, *necessitate præcepti*, as the Sacraments, the Commandments of God and His Church, &c. &c. In explaining these and kindred matters, he will develop with the utmost clearness and precision the nature and malice of internal sins, a point upon which not merely children, but grown-up persons are often grossly ignorant.

And, lastly, he will sedulously unfold the true character of Christian virtue, and show how each one in his own particular state of life is called to be a saint, how easy it is for him to be so, and the means of attaining this all-essential end.

Such is the matter which the catechist may present to his hearers, according to their state or special necessity; but it is not sufficient to present our hearers with matter that is good in itself. This matter must, moreover, be put before them in the most striking manner, and in such a way as will best secure the object in view. The three qualities which will probably have a most direct influence on the attainment of this object, will be the becoming brevity, clearness, and exactness of our catechetical teaching.

Good catechetical instruction is essentially *brief*. "Believe me," says St. Francis of Sales, "and I give you the results of a long experience, when I assure you

that the more you say the less will your hearers retain. The less you say, the more will they profit. When you strive to load the memories of your hearers with an undue weight of matter you simply destroy them. The year in which the vine is most fruitful in leaves and branches it bears the fewest grapes; so the greatest multitude of words does not produce the most abundant fruit."[1] The great maxim of the saint was, *To say little, and to say that little very well.* And with infinite reason. If we wish children to remember and retain what we say to them, we must most carefully guard against unduly taxing either their mind or their memory. The mind of a child, as Quintillian forcibly remarks, is like a vase with a narrow neck. If you attempt to pour a liquid into it with undue precipitation, and in too great abundance, nothing will enter, and the liquid will be lost. But, on the other hand, if you pour in the same liquid gently, and drop by drop, you will very soon fill your vase. And it is precisely thus with a child.

"We should not aim," says Fenelon, "to impress many things upon the mind of a child, for a reservoir, at once so small, yet so precious, cannot contain them, but rather things skilfully and carefully selected. We should, with children of tender age, content ourselves with presenting to their notice those matters which we desire them to remember as long as they live." It is evident, however, that this brevity, so desirable and so necessary, can only be the result of careful preparation

[1] *Guide de Prédicateur.*

on the part of the catechist, of rigorous elimination of all that is not necessary, and of serious meditation, not only of *what* we are to say, but of the *manner* in which we propose to say it. Without such preparation we shall never learn how to contain ourselves within due limits; we shall omit essential points, and dilate superfluously on those which are not so. Vague and diffuse in conception and expression, we shall, in one word, talk much and say little, to the utter confusion of the poor children, who listen to us in the vain hope of acquiring a knowledge of their holy religion from our lips.

If the catechist be bound to aim at brevity, he is no less rigorously bound to aspire to *clearness*. Unless it be clear in conception, in expression, in method, and order of arrangement, his instruction will be useless to his hearers. Children, and persons of feeble intellect, are not able to master abstract ideas, far-fetched thoughts, or confused expressions. They only comprehend and master those matters which recommend themselves to their understanding, without laborious reflection and without serious effort. Since, then, the children are incapable of raising themselves to his elevation, the catechist must be content to descend to their level. He must accommodate himself to their weakness. He must deliver the matter, which he has carefully prepared, with the utmost clearness of articulation and pronunciation. He must be content to repeat, again and again, what he has already said, until he can assure himself, by repeated interrogations, that he has been comprehended, and his teaching mas-

tered. He must patiently support the annoyance and trouble which human nature may have to sustain from the stupidity of the ignorant and feeble-minded, or the fickleness and natural inconstancy of the childish disposition: *Nimis tardus misericorditer succurrendus est*, must be his maxim in this matter. This principle of clearness, which is essential to all instruction, is a thousand times more so to catechetical teaching. As we developed this matter at considerable length in the first part of this work, we now refer the reader to that place for further information on this point.[1]

Catechetical instruction must be *solid* and *exact*. Many priests seem to think that anything is good enough for children, and that it is of little consequence whether the matter which he teaches them be true, solid, and exact, or the contrary. There could be no greater mistake than this. In the first place, the catechism is simply nothing but an explanation of the word of God, and this ought to be enough to secure for it that respect and esteem which are incompatible with either inexactness or positive falsity of doctrinal teaching. But, independently of this reason, the catechist is bound to the greatest exactness and solidity in his teaching. If this teaching be untrue, his hearers will form to themselves false consciences, which will be the cause of innumerable and grave sins. If it be inexact, and not strictly in conformity with the doctrine of the Church, he will, in all probability, thus lay the foundation of a spirit of doubt and of unbelief which will not

[1] Sacred Eloquence, p. 172. 3rd Edition.

fail to bring forth its unwholesome and poisonous fruit in due season. At present, the children take whatever the catechist says to them on the authority of his word, and undoubtingly. But the day will soon come when that word will lose its authority; when the children will begin to weigh the doctrine, if we can call it by such a name, which was delivered to them, not in the scales of their teacher's influence or character, but in those of its own intrinsic truth or falsity; and when they find that they have been deceived on one point, they will soon begin to doubt of others, till in the end, perhaps, they will give up all pretence of faith, of purity, and of truth. It is, then, essential to see that our catechetical instructions contain nothing which is not solidly true and scrupulously exact.

If all this be true, it is, we trust, pretty evident that even catechetical instruction, to be successful, must be carefully and diligently prepared. Without such preparation the instruction will be full of useless repetitions, of hazardous or false decisions, of vain and empty digressions. It will be so obscure as to render it morally impossible for the children to obtain any clear or distinct idea on the matter in hand. And this becomes still more apparent when we reflect that, in speaking to the young or the ignorant, it is not enough for us to have a clear and expedite knowledge of *what* we are about to say. We must also know *how* to say it in such a manner as will be comprehensible to them. We must know how to conceive a subject as they conceive it; to express it as they express themselves, and to keep ever before our minds that what might be very clear to

the world in general will very likely be difficult of comprehension and obscure to them.

If, then, we wish to be understood, we must be content to prepare ourselves with serious care. We must strive to fathom the extent of the knowledge and information of those to whom we speak, that so, in our instructions, we may proceed from the *magis notum* to the *minus notum*. We must reflect upon the meaning which they attach to words, and upon the manner in which they express themselves in ordinary conversation. We must study all the means of rendering our instructions agreeable and interesting; and, having thus laid the foundation, we may proceed to raise the edifice; or, in other words, to construct the plan of our instruction, and to combine its various details into one compact and well-arranged discourse.

We need hardly say that the first and most essential step in this proximate preparation, will be a diligent reading of the text of the catechism, and a careful study of the best works bearing on this matter. Amongst a vast number which would be found useful and interesting, the following will be found pre-eminently so :— The Catechism of the Council of Trent; the Catechism of Constance, 4 vols.; Montpelier, 6 vols.; De Charency; Bourgos, 2 vols., de la Chétardie; the Catechism of Fleury; the Catechism of Nantes; the Catechism of Bellarmine, which received the highest commendations of Benedict XIV. and many other popes; the explanation of the Catechism of Geneva, by Duclot, 7 vols.; the Catechism explained by 400 historical facts, by M. Gullois, curé of Mans; the Catechism of Faith and Morals, by M.

de Lantage; and lastly, the Catechism of Christian Doctrine, by the Rev. Patrick Power, a work of the greatest practical utility, and one of which we cannot speak in too high a manner. For order of arrangement, for judicious brevity, combined with sufficient fulness of matter, and for general usefulness to the missionary priest, we know of no work on the catechism more worthy of commendation than that of the Rev. Mr. Power. We have recommended it for some years, and have found the ecclesiastical students under our care in college, as well as the young priests who have departed to the foreign missions, experience the greatest advantage from the use of it.

Having thus carefully prepared, not only the matter of his instruction, but the manner of delivering it, let the young preacher approach this duty with a great desire of procuring the glory of God, and advancing the interests of those committed to his care; let him purify his intention from all unworthy or less perfect aims; let him animate himself with that spirit of fervour and devotion which are at once the life-blood and the strength of the priest; and, thus animating himself, he will undertake this holy exercise with that modest confidence which will be the surest guarantee of his success. He will be in earnest, and therefore God will bless his efforts, and crown them with abundant fruit.

DELIVERY.

"Nihil licet esse perfectum, nisi ubi natura curâ juvatur."—QUINTILIAN.

"Splendore vocis et dignitate motus fit speciosum et illustre quod dicitur."—CICERO.

DELIVERY.

CHAPTER I.

True Idea of Delivery—Falsity of the Principles laid down by a Modern Writer—Necessity and Essential Properties of a Good Delivery.

HAVING conducted the young preacher through the various stages which, whatever its nature or subject may be, fairly enter into the consideration of the *preparation* of his discourse, it only now remains to follow him into the pulpit, and to offer him some practical counsel and advice, by the aid of which he may secure the *perfect and felicitous public delivery* of that discourse which has been prepared, with so much earnest care and zeal, in the privacy of his study.

We are, however, met at the very outset of our inquiry into this most serious subject, by a very grave difficulty: to wit, that, whilst delivery is a matter of the utmost importance, it is one which cannot be

taught, at least in its entirety, by any merely technical rules, or by the establishment of a certain number of dogmatic principles, which may be more or less correct in themselves and practicable in their application. There are not wanting some who confound, in an extraordinary manner, action and delivery, and who, when they speak of delivery, simply mean action. These same persons do not, of course, fail to reproduce the well-known anecdote of Demosthenes, who, when he was asked what was the first and greatest quality of oratory, answered, Action; what the second? Action; what the third? Action. These writers, whilst thus confounding action with delivery, at the same time use action in its most limited signification: viz., to imply mere gesture. Blair, in relating this anecdote, translates *actio* as delivery, which, rightly understood and fully rendered, as including everything comprised in the public expression of any oration: viz., utterance as applied to the voice, and action as applied to gesture, is evidently its true meaning. And, that "actio" does not signify mere gesture, is evident from the words of Cicero, where he says: "But as to the advantages and excellency of *action*, the chief and most desirable lies in a *good voice*."

Delivery, then, in its full meaning, comprises utterance, as applied to the use of the voice, and action as applied to gesture.

If this be the true idea of delivery, it follows that it cannot be taught, as we have just said, at least in its entirety, by any merely technical rules. If a man's voice be almost hopelessly weak, discordant, or un

manageable, no amount of teaching, no number of rules for its management, will ever give him the sweetness or the flexibility of a Mario. But, granting this, we must also add, that skilful teaching can do much to enable him to overcome natural defects and impediments; and this, perhaps, is still more true where there is question of clownish and ungraceful gesture, than of defects either in the quality or the management of the voice. And hence, we cannot agree with Whately in the principles which he lays down on this matter. In the warmth of his advocacy for what he calls the "natural manner," he surely rushes into the other extreme. It is surely an extreme opinion to hold, as he does in one place, that "no *care* should, in any case, be taken to use graceful or appropriate action, which, if not perfectly unstudied, will always be intolerable." Again, he remarks that it would be inconsistent with the principles which he has laid down "to deliver any *precepts* for gesture; because the observance of even the best conceivable precepts would, by destroying the natural appearance, be fatal to their object."

We perfectly agree with this writer in his commendation of the "natural manner;" and if the object of all teaching, or of artificial systems, as he calls such teaching, were to produce a purely dramatic and artificial style of delivery, we would most cordially join in his condemnation of it. But it seems to us that careful and judicious teaching may, without resulting in the formation of a false and merely artificial manner, do much to develop natural good qualities, and to cor-

rect those defects, whether of nature or of style, which so frequently ruin the effect of discourses that otherwise are all that can be desired. Nay, more; we have, in the course of our experience, met with many very promising young men, to whom such teaching was a matter of absolute necessity, and who, without this aid, would never have been able to rid themselves of such gross and flagrant improprieties of speech and manner as would infallibly have marred the effect of their most careful efforts, and blighted the fruits of all their labour and their zeal. Nor have we found that a careful study of the theory and practice of delivery has necessarily resulted in the formation of an artificial style. When, therefore, Dr. Whately asserts that "probably not a single instance could be found of anyone who has attained, by the study of any system of instruction that has hitherto appeared, a really good delivery, but that there are many—probably nearly as many as have fully tried the experiment—who have, by this means, been totally spoiled—who have fallen irrecoverably into an affected style of spouting, worse in all respects than their original mode of delivery," we are compelled to conclude, either that his experience must have been very limited, or that, in his zeal to establish his own opinion, which certainly can claim for itself the charm of novelty, he allowed himself to become blind to the very solid arguments which can be advanced on the other side of the question.

Whilst, therefore, we freely admit that a good delivery, in its full sense, is not to be acquired by the mere study of technical rules, or of dry precepts, but

that it must have its foundation in nature, and be inspired by the soul which yearns to speak, just as the birds of the air are inspired by a natural instinct to sing, we are equally free to repeat that this faculty, having its foundation in nature, is one which is susceptible of almost infinite development and cultivation. We shall, perhaps, most powerfully induce the young preacher to apply himself to this cultivation and development by briefly reminding him how essentially necessary the possession of a good delivery is, not only that he may discharge the ministry of the Word with credit to himself, but with glory to God, and with real profit to souls; by showing him in what measure and degree natural qualifications are to be assisted, and natural or acquired defects are to be overcome by study; by explaining the true aim and object of such study, when it ceases to be useful, or becomes positively injurious.

St. Francis of Sales gave expression to a truth, the practical influence of which upon the sacred orator can scarcely be too highly estimated, when he said, "that the most eloquent composition, badly delivered, will produce little or no effect; whilst a very mediocre speech, eloquently delivered, will often be attended with the most striking results." However limited our experience may be, it must be limited, indeed, if it does not bear testimony to this truth. How often have we been delighted, and perhaps efficaciously moved to good, by discourses which, possessing no great merit of composition, owed the greater part, if not the whole of their success to the warmth, the earnestness, and the perfect

finish of their delivery. And how often, on the other hand, have we not heard discourses, which were really original in conception and brilliant in composition, fall cold and dead upon the ears of a listless and inattentive audience, simply because they were delivered in a style and manner which was as unworthy of the subject as it was faulty, uninteresting, or unbecoming.

Let, then, the young preacher intimately persuade himself that the possession of a good delivery, or, at the very least, a delivery which shall be free from any glaring defect, is absolutely essential to that measure of success to which he may aspire, and to which he is bound to aspire, in the discharge of his sacred office. The truth of this assertion will be at once obvious, if we reflect for an instant on the office of the public speaker, on the position which he assumes in relation to his hearers, and the end which he necessarily proposes to himself in addressing them.

Whenever we address ourselves to others, as Dr. Blair well remarks, our intention certainly is to make some impression on those to whom we speak: it is to convey to them our own ideas and emotions. Now, the tone of our voice, our looks and gestures, interpret our ideas and emotions no less than our words; nay, the impression they make on others is frequently much stronger than any that words can convey. We often see that an expressive look, or a passionate cry, unaccompanied by words, conveys to others more forcible ideas, and rouses within them stronger passions than can be communicated by the most eloquent discourse. And this mode of communicating the sentiments by

which our own soul is deeply moved, is the very language of nature, and hence the secret of its success; a success founded on mutual sympathy, and gaining its greatest triumphs through that secret influence, whose effects the poet describes when he says,

> "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."
> —*Troilus and Cressida.* Act iii., sc. iii.

In the voice, in the eye, in the soul of the true orator, there is a something which answers instinctively to the cravings of his hearers, to the demands of those who sit at his feet, who hang upon his words, and who, with their eyes riveted upon his face, speak to his soul in that unspoken but most eloquent language, whose mystic power may be and is felt with a responsive throb by such a one, but can never be described. The flash of his eye is enough to inflame the heart of his audience; the upraising of his hand is enough to hold them spell-bound. They may love the truth which he proclaims to them, or they may hate it. The cooler reason may reject the doctrine which is proposed to them; but, spite of themselves—spite of the dictates of reason—they cannot resist the fascination of the manner in which it is proposed to them. There is such a close and intimate connection between certain sentiments and the proper manner of giving expression to them, that he who does not express them in this manner will never succeed in persuading us that he really feels them himself, or is influenced by them. Practically, his delivery gives the lie to the words which his lips utter, and in him the beau-

tiful and impressive words of Shakspeare find a full and perfect application :—

> "Pleads he in earnest! Look upon his face,
> His eyes do drop no tears; his prayers are jest;
> His words come from his mouth, ours from our breast;
> He prays but faintly, and would be denied;
> We pray with heart and soul."—*Richard II.* Act v., sc. iii.

But if these principles be true—and who shall prove their falsity—when they have reference merely to the secular orator, to him who speaks for merely human ends, and pleads for the gaining of merely human objects; how much more true, how infinitely more important do they not become when applied to him whose duty, office, and privilege it is to speak from the Christian pulpit; to him who speaks with the authority of God; to him who holds the fate of many souls in his hand, and who wields no power so potent for good or for evil, so fraught with the most momentous results, according to the use he shall make of it, as the ministry of the Word?

It is no praise to such a one to say that he speaks well. He deserves no credit for this; for it is simply his duty, and a duty which admits of no prevarication in its full and perfect discharge.

If it be useful to preach the gospel, then, as it has been well said, it is useful to preach it so that it will be understood and felt.[1] If its truths ought to be expressed at all, they ought to be expressed fully and properly. To proclaim them, and yet adopt such a manner as will obscure or pervert their meaning and blunt their force, is to do and to undo a thing at the same

[1] Russell's Pulpit Elocution.

time. The Deity might have required that his Word should be merely read in silence; or that it should be repeated in a whisper from one individual to another; or that it should be chanted or sung. But He chose to ordain that it should be preached, *i. e.*, uttered in the appropriate style, by a sacred orator to a listening congregation. He who made man knew what was in man, and he knew that there were latent sensibilities of the soul which could be touched by nothing so well as by truth eloquently spoken. And thus, with infinite wisdom, He adapted the means for our spiritual renovation to the principles of our nature. The ordinance of preaching was wisely chosen as the means most philosophically adapted to impress the mind with religious truth; and, the more perfect the preaching is, so much the more exquisite is its adaptation to produce the intended effect. The very reason for which God requires us to preach the Word makes it necessary to preach it *well;* to speak according to the best rules of elocution, which are no other than the rules prescribed by nature, by the God of nature.

We may well conclude these brief remarks, on the importance and necessity of a good delivery, by the anecdote which is told concerning a celebrated actor and a learned divine.

"How is it," asked the divine, "that people listen with so much emotion to what you say, which they know to be fictitious, and about which they would not care even if it were true, while they hear from us, with comparative apathy, truths the most sublime and the most important to them."

"*Because*," answered the actor, "*we deliver fiction like truth, and you deliver truth like fiction.*"

Fully impressed with the importance of a graceful, correct, and powerful elocution, the young preacher will then naturally have in his eye, in forming his delivery, two great ideas: the first, to speak in such a manner as to be fully and easily understood by all who hear him; the second, to speak with such grace and force as to please and move his audience.

We have insinuated more than once, in the course of these remarks, that nature must have a very leading share in the formation of a good delivery, and that there are some of its essential qualifications which can be found in nature alone. But, if the possession of a good delivery be a matter of such immense importance, and of such practical influence upon the success of the preacher, then it follows that, unless delivery is to be left entirely to nature, which we altogether deny, the young orator who desires to succeed must make a careful study of the same, and avail himself of all that assistance which his own zeal and common sense, combined with the personal teaching of a judicious and experienced preceptor, may present to him. And here it is, of course, that the precise province of *teaching* comes into play.

Whately would assert, that, whatever the intention of the teacher may be, the infallible end of his teaching is to form an artificial style, and thus to mar the efforts and destroy the success of the pupil. But it is not so. The end of all study, or of all teaching in this matter, is, not to make men artificial, but to make them cease

from being so; not to mend or transform nature, but to restore and develop it; to rectify the depraved tastes of man; to teach those subordinate graces of utterance which never would have been forgotten if man had not been sluggish, regardless of his influence over others, unmindful of his accountability to heaven for every gift which he has received. The end of such study is to make the preacher natural, and therefore impressive, and therefore attractive. And although, no doubt, there is *art* in all this, and although we study delivery from this point of view, as we do any other art, it is art in its most genuine, its highest and best form—the art of embodying nature in practice.

We take it, then, as granted, that good speaking is better than bad speaking; and we take it as equally evident that there are many who, from defects of voice, of utterance, and pronunciation, from ungainly gesture, and clownish habits of body, will never become good speakers, unless by a careful attention to those defects, whatever they may be, and a diligent study to amend and eradicate them. And this, not because a man is *naturally* awkward and ungraceful, since there is no more perfect specimen of grace in creation than an innocent and unsophisticated child, but because, by unfortunate associations, and by the perversion, more or less voluntary, of natural graces and faculties, we have defaced and disfigured the gifts of God in ourselves. Hence, to use once more the words of an accomplished writer on this subject, we aim by the study of delivery to restore the lost power of expression; to inspire natural life into the voice; to strip off the incrustation

of mechanical habit, and leave the soul free to utter itself in whatever mood nature prompts to the individual.

This is the true end and object which we propose to ourselves in studying the art of a good delivery. We certainly aim at correcting whatever may be amiss with our voice, whether it be in mere articulation or in modulation; whatever may be wrong with our gesture, whether it be in excess or defect. Yet, it does not follow from this that we are to end by becoming artificial; or that, carrying our rules with us into the pulpit, our attention is to be principally directed, during the delivery of our discourse, not to *what* we are saying, but to the *manner* of saying it. Such a result would be a perversion of all the legitimate aims of oratory. But there is no more need to bring the rules of oratory into the pulpit than the rules of grammar or rhetoric. Both must be studied, and both must exercise their power in the pulpit, but neither must be seen or felt. The greatest orator pays the strictest attention to the smallest rules of grammar, but he does this involuntarily, so to speak; nor does such attention interfere for one moment with the fire and energy of his discourse. Habit has become with him in this respect a second nature, and this nature is none the less simple, strong, spontaneous, and vigorous in its manifestation, because it has been subjected to discipline, and refined by careful study. And so it is to be, precisely, with all that goes to make up a good delivery. The voice is to be trained, and the body is to be drilled, in private, and under the supervision, where this is possible, of a skilful

teacher. The rules of elocution are to be brought to bear upon and to form the man, to correct his bad habits, whether natural or acquired, and to render the body the pliable and fit instrument of the mind, which is the seat of the highest thoughts and the most powerful emotions. But, once the sacred orator enters the pulpit, supposing always that he is thoroughly in earnest, he will think no more of his technical rules of delivery than he does of the rules of the grammar. Those rules and that training will, no doubt, influence his action and regulate his gestures; but it will be, so to speak, involuntarily, and without any direct attention of his mind to these minor matters. That mind, with all its faculties and powers, will be absorbed by the dignity of his office; by the immensity of the interests committed to his charge, which he thus seeks to influence for good; by that feeling of awful but consoling responsibility which will possess his whole being, and raise it infinitely above such a petty consideration as the manner in which his hand is to be raised or his fingers extended. He will, we repeat once more, acquit himself correctly in all these minor matters and circumstances, but it will be as spontaneously and freely as it will be without any violent distraction of his mind from the substance and the spirit of his discourse.

Having thus dwelt on the necessity and importance of a good delivery, and the extent to which nature is to be assisted by art, or, in other words, by study and teaching, we have now to repeat the assertion which we have already made more than once, viz., that the art of a good delivery can hardly be taught on paper, and

that, of all the branches of sacred eloquence, this is the one in which the personal training of a skilful and prudent preceptor is most indispensable. For this reason, and because it is evidently impossible in the limits of a work like this, to enter into all the minutiæ of the art of delivery, we shall only glance at this matter somewhat briefly. But, as this work may fall into the hands of some who do not enjoy the advantage of an experienced teacher, and as it will not be altogether useless to bring the great general principles which regulate delivery, as such, prominently before the minds of even those who do possess this advantage, we now propose to treat, as briefly as may be, the special properties of a good delivery, and the special qualifications which are requisite for its attainment, viz., the management of the voice, and the use of gesture.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOICE.

SECTION I.

The Obligation of making himself heard imperative upon everyone who is obliged to Speak in Public—Means of doing so—Articulation—Pitch—Rhetorical Pauses.

WE have laid down, as a starting point in this matter, the principle that the young preacher will, in the first place, naturally propose to himself to speak in such a manner as to be readily and easily understood; and, secondly, to do so with such skill as to cause himself to be listened to with pleasure and satisfaction by his hearers.

The attainment of the first of these conditions is simply and absolutely essential for anyone who pretends to speak in public. It depends upon the proper use of the voice, and the due employment of those means which secure a good, clear, and distinct pronunciation, and a sufficient elevation of voice to fill the building in which we have to speak. The second of them is essential to complete success, and depends upon the skilful management of the voice, or, in other words,

upon its proper modulation, and the becoming use of gesture.

And, in the first place, when we profess to speak in public, we certainly do so, that we may convey our own ideas and views to our audience; and it necessarily follows that, in order to secure this end, we must have the power to make ourselves heard; a matter which is much more easy of attainment than many seem to imagine. There are few men of ordinary health, strength, and organs of speech, who cannot fill even a very large building, if they only know how to use, and to take proper care, of the voice.

The voice, which is merely human breath, receiving sound from human organs, and thus constituting the material which is worked up into speech, is formed by the passage of air from the lungs through the larynx and cavities of the mouth and nose. It is an organ of wonderful power. It is capable of the most delicate flexibility, of great compass and range, and of inexhaustible expression. It is a well vouched-for fact, that a fine natural voice, well managed, is capable of such intense force as to be clearly heard, under favourable circumstances, at a distance of several miles. The natural powers, however, and capacities of the human voice, are scarcely less wonderful than its susceptibility of cultivation; and it is with this we have to do at present, rather than with those.

The very lowest measure of success at which the preacher, as we have just said, can possibly aim, is to make himself heard. It is a measure of success which, unfortunately, many do not attain; and this, not from

any natural want of power or volume in the voice, but simply from want of knowing how to use it properly, or care to do so. Most preachers who are not heard incur this inconvenience, because their pronunciation is defective or false. Every man who, *positis ponendis*, takes proper care about his pronunciation, will at least make himself heard. If he cannot do this, he has evidently no business in the pulpit.

The preacher's pronunciation, then, may be fairly said to hold the first, and most absolutely essential place in the consideration of this matter. A perfect pronunciation really depends upon one quality, viz., clearness and distinctness. We take it, of course, for granted, that a clergyman will speak with purity and correctness; that he will accommodate himself to the usages of polite society; that he will avoid all provincial accents or local peculiarities. He will keep himself free from all unpleasant singularity, whether it take the shape of uncouth rusticity, or affected elegance; he will equally shun unpleasant hoarseness, or distressing effeminacy of voice; he will not roar and bellow like a Falstaff, any more than he will pipe like a lean and slippered pantaloon, or gobble up his words like a wretched school-boy, hurrying over his ill-learned lesson. Supposing him to avoid these gross violations of propriety, and employing the calm, grave, equable flow of voice, which becomes the minister of the gospel, we repeat that the success of his pronunciation will depend upon its clearness and distinctness.

The well-trained speaker will be distinguished by the perfect exactness, yet perfect ease, of his articula-

tion. Articulation has been described, not inaptly, as spelling by sounds; and as the perfect penman takes care perfectly to form every letter which represents the word he writes, so the speaker, who articulates properly, takes care to give its full value to the sound of those letters the combination of which produces spoken words. A good articulation, writes Sheridan, consists in giving every letter in a syllable its due proportion of sound, according to the most approved method of pronouncing it, and in making such a distinction between the syllables of which it is composed, that the ear shall without difficulty acknowledge their number, and perceive at once the syllable to which each letter belongs. A good articulation is to the ear, in speaking, what a fair and regular hand is to the eye in writing; and exactness in sounding the words rightly corresponds to propriety in spelling. Now, nothing can be more simple than this, and yet how many confound *distinctness* with *loudness*, and imagine that they must of necessity be heard, because they happen to be endowed by nature with a pair of lungs which enable them to roar to their heart's content.

Loudness does not necessarily suppose distinctness; on the contrary, it is frequently most directly opposed to it. It is a well-known fact that the noise and tumult of a large city can scarcely be distinguished at the distance of a mile, whilst the music of a band, which may be performing in one of its squares, will be heard quite plainly. Such is the distinction between noise and musical sound; noise being a confused mixture of sound produced by the concussion of non-elastic bodies,

whereas musical sound is a pure harmonious effect emanating from a simple elastic body, as the tone of a bell.[1] This sufficiently explains the fact that musical sounds fly farther, and are heard at a greater distance, than those which are louder and more noisy; and how it is that the effect of the voice depends much more upon its power as a musical organ, than upon its volume.

The first requisite, then, in order to make oneself heard, is to articulate every syllable which we utter with clearness and distinctness. Without this absolute and essential distinctness of utterance, as a modern writer well observes, the metre and rhythm of verse are destroyed; many words are not distinguishable in sound from others of somewhat similar form, though of widely different signification, and the whole delivery is confused and inelegant.[2] A preacher of merely moderate power of voice, who is careful to articulate clearly and distinctly, makes himself heard in a large assembly much more easily, and with less effort to himself, than a person whose organ is of much greater natural power, but who is careless or indifferent in regard to his articulation. This is an assertion which is borne out by every-day experience.

The articulation, then, of the well-trained speaker will be perfectly easy, and yet perfectly exact. It will delight by the brilliant effect and the positive beauty of sound which will be the result of exact adjustment and free play of the organs of speech, matters that

[1] Gardiner's Music of Nature. [2] Russell's Pulpit Elocution.

are carefully attended to by every man who knows how to use his voice. And this attention to distinct articulation not only secures to the speaker the first and most necessary condition of making himself understood, but it also enables him to dispense with that mere loudness of voice, which is at once so wearying to himself, and so annoying to his hearers.

Defective articulation is either the result of carelessness or of want of proper training. The most easy, the most natural, and, perhaps, the only real effectual manner of correcting this bad habit, is to read aloud in the presence of one who is able and willing to call our attention to our defects, and to prescribe the proper remedies for them. A few such practical lessons will be of more value than volumes of mere precepts. No doubt, a person may do much by private industry to correct his faults in this respect. It is an excellent plan to write out a list of those words in which we know ourselves to be especially defective, and to read them aloud, several times a day, carefully, slowly, exactly, and with a proper attention to their syllabic and literal analysis. By this means we may do much to secure a clear, sharp, and distinctly-marked articulation; but this plan will, nevertheless, be infinitely more laborious and less effectual than a course of reading under the personal superintendence of a competent professor. Such a system of teaching will be most powerful to produce the cultivated speaker. The finished orator is one who, having subjected his voice and all the organs of speech to a thorough-going cultivation, is able to

impart to every word he utters its peculiar modification of force, as regards the characteristic commencement and termination of sounds expressive of emotion.[1] His tones of command will be marked by the boldness and decision with which the accented sound of every emphatic word commences; his tones of entreaty by sounds commencing softly, but swelling out earnestly, and afterwards diminishing; his utterance in the mood of stern resolve, will be marked, on the contrary, by the abrupt explosive termination of characteristic sounds; and his tones of surprise will exhibit the peculiar intensity of this emotion in its characteristic tendency to mark, with special force, both the opening and the closing of emphatic sounds; his exclamations of impassioned excitement will be distinguished not merely by vague and general loudness, or by an ordiuary swell of voice, but by a well-marked and highly-characterized utterance, which lays an obvious stress on the beginning, the middle, and the end of every emphatic sound.[2]

The first and most essential requisite, then, to make oneself heard is, we repeat once more, to articulate with the utmost precision, to employ the lips, the tongue, the teeth, and all the organs of speech fully, and to give every syllable its due value and effect in pronunciation.

The next and scarcely less essential requisite is to take the proper pitch, when we begin to speak. By pitch we understand that degree of elevation or depression which is given to the starting note in speaking;

[1] Rush on Elocution. [2] Russell's Pulpit Elocution.

and, as the pitch in starting naturally affects all the notes of speech which follow it, by making them higher or lower, it is evident that it is a matter of the utmost importance to the speaker to regulate the pitch of his voice discreetly and correctly.

Every speaker whose voice is not corrupted has three pitches—the middle, the high, and the low.

The middle pitch is that which is used in ordinary conversation, and it varies of course according to the character or quality of each individual voice. It is the only pitch which most speakers can use with effect. It is especially suited, and indeed is the only proper one, for narration, for simple description, for the statement of a case, or for calm and deliberate reasoning; whilst at the same time it admits of a certain degree of energy and animation, and is capable of expressing, at least in a modified manner, the various passions and emotions of the soul.

The high pitch is employed when it is necessary to express elevated feeling, impetuosity, or passion; and it is also specially suited to warm and animated description, as well as exciting narrative.

Low pitch is used to give expression to deep feeling and to accumulated passion, and it is the natural tone of hate, melancholy, remorse, grief, suppressed rage, and reflection of a more than usually solemn character. It is also employed to express the highest and most profound manifestations of love and veneration.

Since, as has been remarked, the pitch in starting naturally affects all the notes of speech which follow, by making them higher or lower, the speaker must take

the utmost care to pitch his voice properly. It is not easy to lay down any general rule in this matter. The necessary pitch to give one's voice will always, of course, be measured, in the first place, by the extent of our audience. If the voice be sufficiently elevated to enable them to hear with ease and pleasure, it is, in so far, properly pitched. No one, at all events no preacher, is fit toaddress an audience unless he is prepared to raise his voice in such a way as to be heard by the great majority of that audience, always supposing that the number is not extraordinarily large, and that the building in which he speaks is fairly adapted for the transmission of sound.

Ordinary speakers will, as a rule, pitch their voices on *fa;* they will not rise above *la*, nor fall below *re*. If the voice be strained above *la*, it passes into a squeak; if it falls below *re*, it becomes a grunt.

There is, moreover, in every church, some one spot, generally a pillar, which appears the best measure of the capability of the building for the transmission of sound. Let the preacher take pains to discover this test-point; let him, when he commences his discourse, direct his voice towards it, in such a manner as, so to speak, to strike upon it; and, under ordinary circumstances, a fairly intelligent speaker, who possesses a fairly trained and cultivated voice, will not have much difficulty about his pitch.

Supposing, then, the preacher to articulate distinctly, and to pitch his voice discreetly and correctly, the only thing remaining to make himself heard, at least with clearness and distinctness, at which we need now glance,

is what may be called the due observance of the Rhetorical Pauses.

Scarcely anything is more prejudicial to that perfect distinctness of utterance, on which we are thus insisting, than the undue degree of haste and precipitation of which so many young preachers are guilty. This defect is met by a careful attention to the Rhetorical Pauses.

By Rhetorical Pauses we understand those well-timed rests which the speaker gives his voice, either before or after words, and which are suggested, either by his feeling or his judgment, as the most effectual means of bringing out his meaning with greatest beauty, force, and skill. Punctuation naturally forms the basis of rhetorical pauses, but only to a certain extent. It is far too limited and imperfect to suit all the purposes of a finished and expressive delivery; and, hence, other pauses have been superadded, and reduced to rule, to aid the speaker in developing more fully the power and beauty, as well of his thought, as of its expression by language. The leading principles in this matter, which may be found developed at greater length in any standard work on elocution, may be thus summarized:—

I. A rhetorical pause should be made after the nominative case when it is an important word; and, still more, when it consists of several words.

II. Before and after every parenthesis, or parenthetic clause.

III. After words in opposition or apposition.

IV. Before the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, *what*, and *that;* and also before *that* used as a conjunction.

V. Between the substantive and adjective, when the adjective follows the substantive.

VI. After each adjective, except the last, belonging to one substantive; also after each adverb, except the last, belonging to one verb.

VII. After the conjunction *but*, or any conjunctive or disjunctive particle which introduces an important clause; also after the adverb *for*.

VIII. Before the infinitive mood generally; before and after every important idea or thought; and whereever an ellipsis occurs.[1]

These rules are founded on two great general principles; first, that it is necessary to keep together the groups of words between stops, and not to mix a word of one group with the preceding or subsequent group; secondly, that, to give an important idea its greatest force, it is necessary to pause a little before it, in order to prepare the audience for it, and a little after it, that it may have time to sink into the minds of the hearers, and thus produce its full and complete effect.

By attending to these three vital conditions—his articulation, the proper pitch of his voice, and a due observance of the rhetorical pauses—the young preacher will at least succeed in making himself intelligible to his audience.

[1] Orators and Elocution.—Barry.

SECTION II.

The Obligation of Speaking, not merely so as to be Heard, but with full Effect and Expression—The Elocution of the Passions—Expression and Modulation—The manner in which Due Expression is to be given to the various parts of a Discourse.

We have already shown that the obligation of making himself heard is imperative upon every preacher, and pointed out some of the means of securing this result. But it is not enough merely to make oneself heard. We must also speak in such a manner as to cause ourselves to be listened to with pleasure and satisfaction by our audience, and this is only to be attained by the skilful and effective use of the voice; or, in other words, no man will be a successful preacher, who does not speak with due expression.

If men were only natural, there would be no need to speak to them about modulation or expression. "Nature," as Cicero tells us, "has given every passion its due expression in the look, the voice, and the gesture; and the whole frame, the look, and the voice of a man, are responsive to the passions of the mind, as the strings of a musical instrument are to the fingers that touch them." A good delivery, as Quintilian assures us, will always be the expression, in spoken words, of the passions which influence and move the mind and the heart of the speaker. Thus, the voice, being the interpreter of our sentiments, will transmit

the tone and temper of our minds to the judges. It is the index of the mind, and it receives as many impressions, and admits as many changes as the mind itself. The mind is influenced by many passions. Each passion has a peculiar tone of voice which characterizes it, and expresses it in words; and hence it follows, that as the preacher's soul is influenced and moved by various sentiments and feelings, he will, if he be natural, speak with a voice that shall vary, like a well-tuned musical instrument, in expression, in melody, and in tone. In joyous topics the voice is full, plain, and, animated with mirth, it flows in a stream of gladsome emotions. In contention, it gives, with elevated spirits, a full stretch to all its nerves and powers. In anger, it is fierce, or boisterous and rough, or has condensed vigour, and uses frequent respiration, for the breath cannot be of long continuance when immoderate in its effusions. When it persuades, advises, promises, or comforts, it is grave; in fear and bashfulness, it is shrunk; in exhortation, it is strong; in debate, round; in pity, pliantly tender and mournful, and intentionally subdued, or rather indistinct; in narratives and familiar discourse, it is straight and even; in vehement passions it rises; in more tranquil, it falls; but higher or lower, in proportion to the degree of the passion.

It is not necessary to dilate, in this place, on the wonderful effect which can be produced by a speaker who addresses an audience under the influence of strong, real, unpremeditated passion. In such circumstances a man is perfectly natural, and, therefore, he is irresistible.

He may even be rude, illiterate, and uneducated; but, so long as he is simply natural, he will produce his effect, although that effect may, from these very circumstances, be of a repulsive or unpleasant nature. Let him be a man of pure mind, of generous instincts, of Christian sympathies, and he will be invincible.

And this is the reason why we remarked above, that, if men would only be natural, there would be no necessity to speak to them of such matters as expression, modulation, &c. But take a young preacher and put him in the pulpit, and how often does it not happen that the man, who in ordinary conversation is natural, perhaps even animated and sympathetic, is suddenly transformed into quite another being. Perhaps he ascends the stilts with the first word of his discourse, and never comes down until he has uttered the last; or, he goes through his sermon like a school-boy saying his task, and saying it very badly, too. But, whatever line he chances to take, it is perfectly artificial—if anything so wretched deserves the name of art—and perfectly unnatural. He exhorts in precisely the same tone of voice with which he beseeches; he prays for the dead with precisely the same expression as he speaks of the most glorious and triumphant mysteries of the faith. The result is, that his discourse, being like nothing in nature—neither speaking, nor praying, nor singing—is an utter failure; and this, notwithstanding all the real pains and trouble that he may have taken about it.

Now, this is an unfortunate state of affairs; but experience amply testifies to its truth. As an ordinary

rule, young preachers fail because, the moment they begin to preach, they cease to be natural. They lay nature aside, and take up some hideous phantom of their own creation in her place, and hence the necessity of teaching such persons to do, by the aid of art, that which they should do spontaneously and by nature.

The first step to be taken with a preacher of this kind is to make him understand that he is unnatural, and to convince him that nature does not utter herself, or give expression to her feelings, in a monotone. You must make him believe that each passion has its own characteristic tone and mode of utterance, and try to get him to appreciate and understand the precise quality of sound suited to indicate each particular emotion or feeling. More than this, he must understand the theory of modulation, as it is called, which simply consists in this, that, as each passion has its own peculiar tone, the preacher will, in passing from one to another, naturally change his pitch; and this change of pitch is change of key, and change of key is modulation. Or, in other words, the expression of passion regards essentially the *quality* of sound suited to indicate any particular emotion or feeling. Modulation regards change of key, high or low, loud or soft notes of speech; and, of course, each passion uses modulation as an instrument to give strength or softness, height or depth, monotony or variety, to its own tones. It naturally follows that modulation may be used, not only to express different passions, but different measures and degrees of the same passion. It equally follows that, when passion is merely *imitated*, which will rarely or never be the case with

the preacher, the most special care must be employed in adopting a suitable modulation.

Mere *paper-teaching* can do but little in this matter—perhaps not much more than point out flagrant defects, and lay down principles—nature and a skilful and prudent teacher must do the rest.

We may, of course, ask how we can acquire that peculiar quality of sound which indicates the passion we may wish to express. The answer is, to *feel* the passion; since, whatever is felt intensely and sincerely, will be expressed strongly and truly. We shall, then, perhaps, further inquire how we are to acquire this feeling, or associate ourselves with the sentiments proper to any particular passion; and we shall be told, and told truly, that nature and art must combine to produce this happy result.

Nature must play the leading part. The true orator, like the true poet, is born, not fashioned or made according to arbitrary rules. Hence, nature must supply that sensibility of soul, that keen instinct and appreciation of the beautiful and the true, which are the foundation of all feeling If a man possess neither this sensibility nor this instinct, let him aspire to become anything rather than an orator. Only let him not be too ready to persuade himself that he does not possess these qualities, or that he is utterly wanting in them, whilst, in fact, he has only obscured and hidden away the faculty with which he is really endowed.

Art must come to the aid of nature; and both Quintilian and Cicero have explained to us how she is to be employed and rendered subservient to our purpose. We

are, say they, to represent to our imagination, in the most lively manner possible, all the most striking circumstances of the transaction we describe, or of the passion we wish to feel. Thus, says Quintilian, if I complain of the fate of a man who has been assassinated, may I not paint in my mind a lively picture of all that has probably happened on the occasion? Shall not the assassin appear to rush forth suddenly from his lurking place? . . . . Shall I not figure to my mind, by a lively impression, the blood gushing from the wounds of the victim, his ghastly face, his groans, and the last gasp he fetches? Meditation, and the habit of thought; the careful study of standard authors; in one word, all that tends to develop the intellect and the imagination is useful and necessary for this end.

The first requisite, then, to speak naturally, is to feel deeply the passion which we have to express; and the more carefully we study, and endeavour to realize all the circumstances of time, place, and person, connected with it, the more likely are we to be thus deeply impressed and moved by it.

Secondly, if, getting rid of undue nervousness, as well as guarding against unbecoming assumption of any kind, we endeavour to express naturally that which we feel deeply and intimately, we are certain to succeed. And we ourselves shall probably be not a little astonished to find how much our feeling will assist our expression, and how much our expression will help to develop our feeling.

Burke tells us that there is such a connection between the internal feeling of a passion and the external

expression of it, that we cannot put ourselves in the posture or attitude of any passion without communicating a certain degree of the passion itself to the mind. This is true, and it is equally so of the tone of voice peculiar to each passion. It is a fact, borne out by experience, that the speaker who assumes a certain tone of voice in order to express some particular passion, is himself wrought upon by the sound he creates, and, though active in the beginning, at length becomes passive by the sound of his own voice on himself. And hence it is that we not unfrequently begin to read or to speak without really feeling any of the passion we wish to express, and end in full possession of it.[1]

To sum up these few general remarks on the elocution of the passions. If we desire to be natural and to speak with due expression, let us earnestly wish for the feeling with which we seek to inspire others; let us dispose ourselves to receive it; having received it, let us endeavour to express it, not as our nervousness, or our habit of ranting, or our indifference, but as nature suggests to us to do. Above all, let us listen to good models, and endeavour to obtain the counsel and advice of one willing and competent to assist us in this matter.

The general principles which hold in regard to expression and modulation are, of course, to be applied to the different parts of a discourse. It is not a rare thing to hear a discourse—introduction, argument, and conclusion—delivered in precisely the same tone from beginning to end. Nothing is more wearying than this

[1] Orators and Elocution.—Rev. Dr. Barry.

both to speaker and audience, as nothing is more calculated to ruin the effect of even the most solid discourses, and rob them of that fruit which they might otherwise lawfully claim.

A preacher should carefully adapt his expression, and vary the tones of his voice, according to the various parts of his discourse.

In the exordium or introduction, it is evident that the voice should be calm, clear, and well regulated. The preacher who commences with a burst of passion, and with the utmost power of his voice, offends against the very first idea of an introduction. It is not natural to become so excited all at once; men are only wrought up to a high degree of passion gradually and slowly. Hence, Cicero says, "*Quid insuavius, quam clamor in exordio? . . . . A principio clamare, agreste et quiddam.*" Besides, if a man commence on his highest pitch, and throw the whole depth of his feelings into his introduction, how is he to rise to those demands which will be made upon him during the progress, and certainly by the conclusion, of his discourse?

The proposition, the definitions, and the merely explanatory or instructive portions of a discourse will be delivered in a tone of voice even more calm, clear, and perfectly balanced than that used in the introduction.

With the body of the discourse will come greater demands for variety and expression. The mere exposition of doctrine will be advanced, calmly and quietly, in a tone of voice somewhat higher than in the introduction, but still free from passion or excitement. Traits of generosity will be recounted in an animated tone;

circumstances calculated to excite our compassion, in a voice full of pathos and tenderness. Questions will be asked in a sharp, brisk tone; and arguments will be advanced in a voice at once searching, firm, and confident. Objections will be refuted in a tone of voice which shall not seem to admit the possibility of a reply, and with an air of triumph which should carry conviction to the heart of the hearer. Whenever, during the progress of the discourse, an appeal to the passions has to be made, it must be done in a voice full of feeling, animation, and depth, and expressing in itself the passion which is to be excited. Above all, the voice must be so husbanded and conserved that the preacher may approach the peroration or conclusion of his discourse, that decisive and supreme moment in his efforts, with his powers unenfeebled, and his voice in perfect order, and ready to answer to the demands which he is about to make on it. In this last final appeal to the hearts of his hearers, the voice must be full of power and of pathos—potent to beseech, to entreat, and to command—to carry conviction to every intellect, and persuasion to every heart.

Some one, perhaps, will say all this is very artificial. We venture to think that it is very natural, and that this is precisely the way in which a man would speak who followed nature, and gave himself up to her guidance. The contrary method of speaking, that which we have been striving to combat in these remarks, is the one which is artificial, and artificial in the very lowest and least artistic meaning of the term.

CHAPTER III.

GESTURE.

SECTION I.

True Idea of Gesture, and the Place which it naturally holds in Animated Delivery—The Action of the Pulpit.

BESIDES speaking in such a manner as to be distinctly heard, and with due force and expression, the finished orator will also, as an ordinary rule, employ some degree of gesture. We say as an ordinary rule, because, whilst it is certain that man naturally imparts his states of thought and the feelings which animate him, by visible as well as by audible language, it is equally certain that at least some great orators have been in the habit of delivering their orations without action or gesture of any kind. Bourdaloue preached his most powerful sermons with his eyes closed and his hands clasped across his breast. This would seem to have been what Nature dictated to him, and following her dictates, his success was perfect. At the same time, his case was undoubtedly an exceptional one; for man expresses himself most naturally and most effectively when he obeys the laws of his

constitution; and those laws instinctively impel him to use his whole bodily frame as an organ of communication. All the most powerful emotions which move the human breast are rendered legible, and manifested to others by the effects which they produce on the features of the countenance, on the attitude of the body, on the action of the arm and the hand. It is hardly necessary to remind our readers of a fact which their own experience must have proved to them thousands of times, that we read each other's inmost hearts quite as plainly in a glance of the eye, in a quiver of the features, in an impassioned motion of the hand, as in the tone and the expression of the voice. Hence it is that the finished orator speaks quite as plainly and as effectively by his gesture as by his voice; and hence, too, we have asserted that such a one will naturally and necessarily employ some degree of gesture.

Whether it arise from natural coldness of temperament; from the defective character of early education, which, instead of developing the perfection of attitude and gesture that is spontaneous in a child, seems to take every means of defacing and crushing it out; or from want of a due appreciation of the nature and the necessity of action; it is certain that nothing is more common and more painful than the coldness and lifelessness of the style of speaking usually employed in the English pulpit. Take the best of our English preachers, and compare him with a French or an Italian orator, and this is evident at a glance. The Italian speaks with every glance of his eye, and with every movement of his hand; and whilst what is

merely natural in an Italian would, perhaps, be grossly exaggerated if employed by an English preacher, it is, nevertheless, much to be desired that we could free ourselves from that miserable coldness and listlessness which seems to freeze us up as soon as we enter the pulpit; which glues our feet to the floor, and chains our hands to our sides; which does not allow our most ambitious effort in the way of gesture to go beyond that see-saw motion of the arm, which can be compared to nothing but the action of a pump-handle.

The nature of an Englishman may not be so warm and impulsive as that of a Frenchman or an Italian, but, after all, it is the same nature; and hence, if it be natural in them, as it most surely is, to employ such warm and animated gesture, it cannot be natural in us altogether to reject it. We have said that man naturally uses his whole bodily frame as an organ of communication with others; and, as action is the language of the body, the orator who neglects or refuses to employ it, deprives himself of one of his most effective instruments. A man is expected to feel what he says, and to show that he feels it by action, as well as by words and by tones. If he lack either the feeling, or the power of fully expressing if he really possess it, he will never be an orator.

Whilst all the greatest writers on this matter, both ancient and modern, concur in asserting the utility and necessity to the orator of a good action, they equally agree that gesture is not to be taught by any rules in a book. It must either be inspired by nature, and then it will be employed instinctively; or, if nature has

to be assisted in developing herself, or in getting rid of deformities which defective training and bad habits have put upon her—in other words, if gesture has to be learned as an art, it must be learned from a professor, and not from a book. Hence, we shall content ourselves with merely glancing at the general principles which should regulate the action of the pulpit, and with suggesting some of the more obvious means of securing grace and avoiding glaring defects.

Whilst, therefore, we impress upon the young preacher the utility and the necessity of learning to speak by his action, as well as with his voice, we remind him, in the first place and before all, that action, to be tolerable, must be natural. No action is better than action which is glaringly bad. It is better for a man to stand stock-still in the pulpit, in a modest and becoming attitude, than employ action which is overdone, false, or exaggerated. In the one case, he may not produce the *full* effect which is due to his discourse; in the other, he will render himself and his discourse ridiculous. Only let him not, through fear of this unpleasant contingency, listen too readily to the whisperings of his false and nervous timidity.

The action, then, of the pulpit must be natural. Nature is perfect, and mere art can never approach her grace. She inspires beauty which no science can teach, and she alone possesses the secret of those gestures which so powerfully enchain the attention and appeal to the heart. The gesture which is the result of art will never be so effective as that which is inspired by nature. When a man is suddenly overtaken by some

great calamity, he gives expression to the emotions of his soul by the most striking gestures. He does not bestow a thought upon them; they are simply spontaneous, and yet they are perfect. It is nature which speaks in the agonized gesture of his hands; it is nature whose accents tremble on his tongue; and the expression which she thus gives to his sorrow is unapproachable by any art, no matter how skilful or how deeply studied. If nature suggest to one man the attitude of calm dignity and perfect repose, as to Bourdaloue; whilst in another she speaks in every quiver of his hand, and in every flash of his eye; in either case the result, if her dictates be followed, will be perfection. On the other hand, just in proportion as we depart from nature we depart from perfection. Just in proportion as we cease to be ourselves—as we lay aside our own voice and our natural manner, the manner inspired and animated by nature—we cease to be effective. In this matter, as in all others where the eloquence of the pulpit is concerned, we must labour to be natural. If for any reason we find it necessary to study the art of good delivery as an art, that study must not be seen in the actual delivery of our discourses. The end, and the only legitimate end of all such study, is to enable us to act as nature acts, when her action is perfectly free and spontaneous. Any gesture which we may employ must, to be not only perfect but even allowable, seem spontaneous and as if inspired by the sentiment of which it is in reality the expression. Hence, we must *speak* to our audience, and not *declaim* at them. We must be content to use

the voice which God has given us, without any undue striving after effect in its modulation and the variation of its tones. In one word, we must, whilst we carefully correct our defects, and turn our good qualities to the very best account, ever remember that we are preachers and not actors, and hence be content to be natural. This perfect conformity with nature was the great and distinguishing characteristic of Massillon; and it is told of him that the first actor of the day, after hearing him preach, was so impressed with the beauty and natural grace of his delivery, that, turning to a companion, he exclaimed in a burst of admiration: "Behold, my friend! a true orator; as for us, we are but comedians." Truly, an eloquent panegyric.

From all this it follows, that no man should unduly seek to imitate another, since such imitation can scarcely ever be natural. It follows, too, that as it is the heart which is to inspire all true and natural gesture, the great secret of perfect declamation is to feel deeply what we say. If we feel deeply, this feeling will, without any thought at the moment or study on our part, modulate our voice in the most perfect manner, and give to the hands that motion, to the eyes that expression, and to the whole body that pose and position, which are most becoming. Such is the modulation and such is the gesture which, inspired by sentiment and regulated by nature, seize upon an audience, carry every heart by storm, and bring persuasion home to every soul.

If the young preacher have acquired bad habits of gesture, if he be clownish, awkward, or affected, let him

study in private to get rid of these defects, just as he studies to correct his bad grammar, or to perfect his composition. Thus far it is the province of art to help and correct nature, to develop and bring out faculties which may be dormant, to form and to perfect taste; in one word, to bring the orator back to nature. But, once he enters the pulpit, let him think no more of art and its rules; let him deliver himself simply, earnestly, and fearlessly, to the guidance of higher and holier instincts; let him seek to be the child and disciple of nature, and he will be perfect.

Besides being natural, the action of the pulpit must be edifying. St. Charles Borromeo, although labouring under many natural defects of voice, manner, and style, produced, nevertheless, a profound impression by the grave modesty of his manner, and by the evangelical air of unction which spoke so eloquently of his sanctity as to seize upon the hearts of his hearers, and move them powerfully to good. The same is related of St. Francis de Sales, Massillon, and many other celebrated preachers. It was enough to see them in the pulpit. Before they had spoken a word they had gained possession of their hearers. It is said of Massillon that, when he commenced to speak, he did so in such a manner as to give you the impression that he could no longer refrain from giving expression to the sublime truths of which he was full; that he could no longer restrain the fire with which he was consumed. It seemed to become a simple necessity of his soul to speak; and, speaking under such a necessity, he carried his hearers by storm.

Applying these principles to himself, the young

preacher will see at a glance how carefully he should avoid in the pulpit any gesture that is in the least extravagant or *outré*. Some preachers indulge in extravagant gestures; they rant and they scold. They are wrong. The spirit of God is peace—it is calm, gentle, grave, and dignified; and it will carry persuasion to hearts which more laboured efforts would merely disgust. He will see, too, that in striving to show in his exterior the simplicity and the modesty of the man of God, he ought not merely to avoid extravagant gesture, but also any undue affectation of elegance or of studied action. Finally, he will understand that the gesture which may suit one man perfectly, may be most unbecoming in another. For example, there is an air, if you will an assumption, of authority which sits perfectly well upon a prelate, a priest who has been long years engaged in the work of the ministry, or upon a celebrated orator who has possession of the public ear, which would be as disedifying as it would be mischievous if it were assumed by a young or an unknown preacher.

Whilst the young preacher avoids extravagance, he will equally guard against too great a monotony of action. As the sentiments with which he is animated will naturally vary according to the different parts of his discourse, so, the action which helps to give those sentiments their full expression will also vary in like manner. Some preachers have but one tone of voice with which to express passions that are most distinct; and but one gesture, that which has been compared to the action of a pump-handle, with which to give expression to every sentiment. What can be more contrary

to nature? The man who acts in this manner, who never varies his tone or his gesture, is surely more like the scholar who recites his lesson, than the orator who preaches. It is a long time since Horace first described him, under the figure of the wretched harper who always plays upon the same string :—

"Ut citharœdus
Ridetur, chordâ qui semper oberrat eâdem."—*Ars poet.*

The man who is the slave of this unvarying monotony will find it very difficult to influence his hearers. They will doubt the reality of the convictions which are expressed in such a cold and lifeless manner. More than that—this monotony will often render him unintelligible, since there are many words in every language, the full meaning of which depends upon the tone in which they are uttered, and the force with which they are expressed. When there is a want of unity between the sentiment uttered and the manner in which it is expressed, our hearers feel instinctively that there is something wrong, and the discourse fails in producing its effect. On the contrary, when the delivery is sufficiently varied, they become interested at once. They give themselves over to him who speaks to them in so natural and pleasing a manner. They appreciate the perfect agreement and concord which exist between his thoughts and the manner in which they are expressed; a concord which gives its due character to his whole delivery, to the countenance, the eyes, the hands, the voice of the orator; a concord which modifies itself continually according to the requirements of the sub-

ject, and thus continually tends to the beauty and perfection of oratory. The effect of such a delivery may be compared to that produced by the performance of a piece of music, of which the great beauty consists in the perfect adaptation of the various tones to the ideas to be conveyed. A delivery which is sufficiently varied and expressive has a wonderful power, since it succeeds in painting the thoughts and sentiments of the speaker in the plainest and most vivid manner. Each gesture has its own signification, just as each word has its own meaning. When these receive their full development at the hands of the skilful speaker they impart an irresistible charm to oratory. Thence the most finished composition derives a new grace; the happiest thoughts a keener vitality; the loftiest sentiments a greater intensity and force. And, as a necessary result, the audience are gained more easily, more completely, and more surely to the will of the orator and to the end which he proposes.

Finally, let the young preacher strive to adapt his action to his subject. When he simply instructs, let his action be calm and gentle as that of a parent who addresses his children. When he speaks of the great eternal truths, let him put on the air and the voice of the prophet who proclaims the attributes of an avenging God, and who, as he does so, trembles for his brethren and for himself. Let him equally adapt his action to his hearers. Before the great and the learned, let him speak with the modest dignity of the ambassador of Christ; before the people, with the authority which has been intrusted to him. He may

allow himself a vehemence of tone and gesture with the simple inhabitants of the country, which would not be merely out of place, but perhaps absolutely injurious to his object, when addressing a city audience. In all cases, let him *speak*, not *rant;* let his most expressive gesture be controlled and regulated by the modesty and self-possession of the Christian orator—the man who speaks for God with the authority of God—an authority, the possession of which will give to him who realizes what it is, a force, a power, a simple majesty, and a natural eloquence, which no mere precept could ever teach him, and which no mere art could ever inspire.

SECTION II.

Leading Qualities of the Action of the Pulpit.

We have said that the finished orator speaks almost as vividly by his bodily action as with his voice, and we have indicated the nature of the action of the pulpit, as well as the great principles by which it should be regulated. Beyond this it is scarcely possible to go in mere theoretical teaching. Vandenhoff, himself an accomplished elocutionist and skilful teacher, thus expresses himself on this matter: "I know of no means of teaching gesture by *written instructions;* nor do I think that much assistance can be gathered from *plates* of *figures* representing different actions and attitudes.

"The first point to be aimed at as the foundation

of a good style of gesture is a natural and easy *carriage* of the body—erect, not stiff, but firm, manly, and free. This is a thing, unfortunately, too much neglected in education generally. An excellent exercise both for voice and health—one that will both improve the strength of the lungs and the carriage of the body—is to *walk* and *speak aloud* at the same time—a task which at first will appear difficult and tiresome, but by practice, carefully observing the rules which I have laid down for *pause* and *inspiration* to supply expended breath, will become easy; and I answer for it that the voice will be by this means much increased in strength, the carriage of the body improved, and the *health of the lungs* greatly promoted. This exercise will also infallibly tend to the improvement of his *general carriage;* for the effort of speaking while walking will compel him instinctively to *hold his body straight* and to *expand his chest* for the more easy delivery of his voice, which cannot have fair play with a *stooping body* or *rounded shoulders*. To speak well, *easily*, and *powerfully*, the *body* must be *erect*, the chest *expanded*, the legs firmly set under the hips to support the body and form a good *fulcrum* for the efforts of the voice. And this is the first step towards *gesture*. The next is to acquire an easy and free use of the arms, and a pliancy of *wrist*. In this the *fencing-master* is the best assistant. This practice will correct the prevailing awkwardness of gesture, which consists in keeping the elbows *glued* (if I may say so) to the side, and working the arm in a continued *angular* movement, most unsightly, and utterly irreconcilable with power or grace of action.

Next, let the speaker always bear in mind that the object of gesture is to assist or enforce the words which it accompanies. Gesture is, in fact, the ally of speech. Its province is to second the voice. '*Action and utterance*' go together; Shakspeare has so placed them; and the action must be akin to the utterance; the gesture must be relative to the words. Gesture, therefore, must not be vague or unmeaning, or it will be a mere 'sawing of the air.' It must have *purport* and *force;* it must be, as it were, an animated comment on the text which it accompanies. . . . At the same time, I must repeat, it is next to impossible to teach gesture by written instructions. Three practical lessons with a good and experienced professor will do more towards giving the pupil *ease*, *grace*, and *force* of action, than all the *books* and *plates* in the world."

There is really very little to be added to this, since it is almost, perhaps quite, impossible to teach on paper the grace, the expression, and the significancy which give gesture all its charm. However, as the body speaks through the hands, the eyes, and the other members, it may be useful briefly to glance at the manner in which they should be governed and controlled.

With regard to the position of the body, Cicero says, "Let the orator's action proceed from the motions of his whole body, and from a manly flexibility of his sides." In regulating this, let him bear in mind the general principle which should govern all gesture, viz., that beauty consists in a gentle, ever-varying wave or graceful curvature; and thus he will avoid the bolt-upright, rigid

posture which some preachers assume, and which is so unbecoming and unpleasant.

The arms and hands have a multiplied duty to discharge. There are, perhaps, comparatively few preachers who have ever realized the wonderful life, vigour, and expression which lurk within a shapely and facile hand. Hence Quintilian says with so much force: "The action of the other parts of the body assists the speaker; but the hands, I could almost say, speak themselves," Any one who has ever listened to a finished French or Italian orator will at once appreciate the truth of this remark; whilst, so far from making any use of these expressive members, one of the greatest difficulties under which an ordinary English preacher labours seems to be to know what to do with them. As a general rule, he clutches the pulpit with them, and holds on, as if for very life, and to prevent himself from being hurled bodily into the air. And how powerful an auxiliary he loses who knows not how to use his hands, is best understood by carefully observing a preacher who is master of their movements, and who is able to turn them to full account.

The first thing to be secured, in the employment of the arms to gesticulate, is to get them away from the sides. Let the young preacher remember, again and again, that in oratory every motion, and most especially that of the arms, should be in curved lines. One of the last matters in which a young English preacher succeeds, is in thus using his arms. Even if he so far conquer his timidity and awkwardness as to venture to employ his hand to gesticulate, in all

probability his elbow remains glued to his side, instead of being gracefully and easily moved in becoming uniformity with it. Whatever Whately might say on this matter, there can, we venture to think, be little doubt that the only way to remove confirmed awkwardness of this kind, is by careful study and private drill. Having, by attention and careful study, gained sufficient mastery over ungainly or unruly members, let the young preacher, when he ascends the pulpit, not hesitate to use his hands, as nature, thus assisted by art and study, may suggest to him. If he have to indicate pain or distress, he will naturally place his hands upon his head; if he wish to appeal to conscience, or to make an attestation of honesty, honor, courage, conscious innocence, on his heart. His finger on his lips, expresses or commands silence; on his forehead, anxious reflection, care, trouble, or indecision. If he appeal to the warm or tender emotions of love and friendship, he will clasp his hands over his heart; and he will extend them—stretched out towards his hearers—in invitation or address.

Referential gesture, which points out an object really present, or indicates the position which it may be conceived to occupy, is expressed by the index, or forefinger, extended and separated from the rest of the fingers. The index finger is also employed to warn, argue, reprove, instruct, or threaten.

In gestures of address, both hands may be extended forward towards the audience; the right hand only may be extended, or the left only; or, the right and left may be extended alternately.

In delarative gesture, the right hand is extended forward—the palm up ; the left may be extended in the same manner ; or both hands together.

There is extraordinary character in the palm of a well-shaped nervous hand ; and this is equally evident, whether it be employed in the *downward* gesture of forbidding, crushing, or destroying ; or whether it be *turned towards* the object addressed with the action of aversion, rejection, or repulsion. The action of the hands, when they are closed or clenched in strong passion is wonderfully vivid and expressive.

The principal gesture is usually performed by the right hand. The left, however, dominates, when the persons addressed are on the left side of the speaker, or when he turns, as he frequently will, from right to left ; both hands are often used together, and, when this is the case, great care should be taken that they harmonize. The gestures of the hands and arms will be free and waving, forming extended graceful curves in dignified delivery ; whilst, of course, conversational gesture admits of less extension, and is employed within narrower limits.

Most writers maintain that gesture should precede the word which it is intended to enforce ; and they give as a reason for this that an emotion, struggling for utterance, produces a tendency to bodily gestures, to express that emotion, more *quickly* than words can be framed ; the words follow as soon as they can be spoken. There is much truth in this remark. However, the space of time by which the action will precede the word will, in most cases, be so infinitesimally small, that

it might be more correct to say that they will be simultaneous.

The preacher will naturally employ but little gesture at the commencement of his discourse. As he warms to his subject, so will his action become more varied and animated, and, as a necessary consequence, more emphatic. When a speaker seeks to enforce the emphasis, or stress of meaning, which his language contains, by a corresponding stroke of his arm, his action becomes what is called emphatic. This emphatic stroke is most frequently made by the right hand, but sometimes by both hands; on the air, in front, at either side, or at both sides, or overhead; by striking a book, the pulpit, or one hand with the other. If the emphasis be unusually strong the head may nod in unison, and a great effect may be produced by a judicious and appropriate stamp of the foot. Still, it is well to remind the young preacher that, in these manifestations of emphasis, the step between the sublime and the ridiculous is an extremely narrow one, and unless the gestures be really spontaneous, and inspired by nature, they are likely to produce a very contrary effect to that intended. As Smart truly observes, the arm, in emphatic gesture, should ascend with the voice towards the emphatic word, and thus, at the close of the thought, or at the most important idea, voice and gesture will concur in presenting it, with fullest force, to the eye and the ear at the same time. In other words, the arm should perform the emphatic stroke exactly at the same instant that the voice pronounces the emphatic word or words.

The Head, "the dome of thought, the palace of the

soul," hangs down in shame or grief, is held erect in pride or courage, and averted in dislike or horror.

The Eyes, "those most pure spirits of sense," which express with the greatest fidelity and variety the thoughts, feelings, intentions, and passions of the mind, are raised to heaven in prayer. They weep in sorrow, and burn in anger, whilst in reflection they are unfixed on external objects, and turned in as it were upon the mind.

Such are the leading ideas regarding the action of the pulpit, which can be most readily expressed on paper. They admit of great extension and of varied application. Nature, good sense, and, where it is practicable, the personal and prudent teaching of one who is master of his subject, will best direct the man who is really in earnest, how to apply them with all that expression and emphatic force of which they are susceptible; and with an effect which will render his discourse a powerful means of advancing the greater glory of God, and of procuring the salvation of immortal souls; the only end worthy of him whose privilege it is to preach the gospel to the poor, to give hearing to the deaf and light to the blind, to cause the dumb to speak the praises of the Lord, to enable the lame to run in the way of His commandments, to bring back into the paths of justice those who have gone astray: to teach all men to bless, to praise, to glorify His Holy Name.

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